ANNUAL REPORT

2004-2005

Alberta 2005 Alberta Centennial

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March 31, 2005

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PREFACE

The Public Accounts of Alberta are prepared in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act* and the *Government Accountability Act*. The Public Accounts consist of the annual report of the Government of Alberta and the annual reports of each of the 24 ministries.

The annual report of the Government of Alberta released June 29, 2005 contains the Minister of Finance's accountability statement, the consolidated financial statements of the province and a comparison of the actual performance results to desired results set out in the government's business plan, including the Measuring Up report.

This annual report of the Ministry of Government Services contains the Minister's accountability statement, the audited financial statements of the ministry and a comparison of actual performance results to desired results set out in the ministry business plan. This ministry annual report also includes other financial information as required by the Financial Administration Act and Government Accountability Act, either as separate reports or as a part of the financial statements, to the extent that the ministry has anything to report.

Responsibility for the Alberta Corporate Service Centre, formerly held by the Ministry of Alberta Government Services, has been transferred to the newly created Ministry of Restructuring and Government Efficiency and its 2004-05 results will be reported in that ministry's annual report.

MINISTER'S ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The ministry's annual report for the year ended March 31, 2005 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at September 1, 2005 along with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Ty Lund
Minister of Government Services
September 1, 2005

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am honoured to present the 2004-05 annual report of the Ministry of Government Services.

Whether Albertans are registering a new car, buying a house, starting a commercial venture or seeking information about the province's consumer protection legislation, they are accessing some of the many services, products and information offered by the Ministry of Government Services and its employees.

Government Services ensures that Albertans can conduct a variety of everyday transactions conveniently in person, by mail or through the strategic use of technology.

The ministry oversees legislation that governs the effective regulation, enforcement and promotion of fair business practices in the marketplace and development of consumer confidence in Alberta. Government Services also provides assistance and direction to various provincial and local public bodies, ensuring that Albertans gain access to the information they need while at the same time safeguarding their privacy.

In delivering a diverse range of services, the ministry has earned a reputation for effectively meeting the needs of Albertans. This success is due in large measure to the ministry's highly skilled, versatile and dedicated staff. In addition, the ongoing commitment and application of innovative technology allows us to serve as a leader in improving the efficient delivery of our products and services.

Government Services celebrated a number of significant achievements in 2004-05 on behalf of our clients and stakeholders. Among the highlights:

- Developed and introduced a special veterans' licence plate to honour Alberta's many veterans in co-operation with the Royal Canadian Legion.
- Implemented the facial recognition component of the new secure driver's licence allowing the ministry to identify potential cases of identity fraud and detect/correct any processing errors.
- Supported an active real estate market by processing an estimated one million land title registrations while achieving significantly reduced turn-around times.

- Represented utilities consumers at Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) hearings and achieved approximately $98 million in reductions in requested electricity and natural gas rates.
- Issued more than 4,000 copies of the *Electricity and Natural Gas Contracts* booklet to help consumers become more aware of their rights and obligations in Alberta's restructured retail energy markets.
- Amended the *Residential Tenancies* Act to address concerns from landlords and tenants on returning security deposits, evictions for unpaid rent and landlords' compliance with public health orders.
- Completed 1,631 consumer investigations and recovered more than $371,000 in settlements for consumers under the provisions of the *Fair Trading Act*.
- Provided advice and information on marketplace issues to nearly 180,000 Albertans through the ministry's toll-free call centre.
- Participated in a joint investigation with the RCMP, the U.S. Postal Service and similar agencies in the United Kingdom and Australia to investigate an Alberta-based company involved in a GST scam targeting tourists.

As these highlights illustrate, Alberta Government Services continues to demonstrate leadership in delivering the services, products and information of importance to Albertans. In the future, we will continue to contribute to those qualities of life that make Alberta a great place to work, play and raise a family.

Ty Lund
Minister of Government Services
September 1, 2005

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING

The Ministry of Government Services includes the Department of Government Services, the Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA) and the Regulatory Review Secretariat.

The executives of the ministry have the primary responsibility and accountability for the respective entities. Collectively, the executives ensure the ministry complies with all relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

Ministry business plans, annual reports, performance results and the supporting management information are integral to the government's fiscal and business plans, annual report, quarterly reports and other financial and performance reporting.

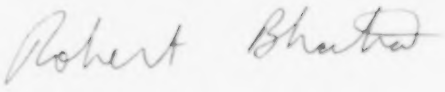
Responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the financial statements and performance results for the ministry rests with the Minister of Government Services. Under the direction of the Minister, I oversee the preparation of the ministry's annual report, including financial statements and performance results. The financial statements and the performance results, of necessity, include amounts that are based on estimates and judgments. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the government's stated accounting policies.

As Deputy Minister, in addition to program responsibilities, I establish and maintain the ministry's financial administration and reporting functions. The ministry maintains systems of financial management and internal control, which consider costs, benefits and risks that are designed to:

- Provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, executed in accordance with prescribed legislation and regulations and properly recorded so as to maintain accountability of public money;
- Provide information to manage and report on performance;
- Safeguard the assets and properties of the province under ministry administration;
- Provide to Executive Council, Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Government Services any information needed to fulfil their responsibilities; and

- Facilitate preparation of ministry business plans and annual reports required under the *Government Accountability Act*.

In fulfilling my responsibilities for the ministry, I have relied, as necessary, on the executive of the ministry.



Robert Bhatia
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Government Services
September 1, 2005

OVERVIEW

Ministry Entities

Minister of Government Services

Honourable Ty Lund, Minister
Phone: (780) 415-4855 Fax: (780) 415-4853

Government Services

Robert Bhatia, Deputy Minister and Utilities Consumer Advocate
Phone: (780) 427-0621 Fax: (780) 427-0902

Consumer Service and Land Titles

Laurie Beveridge, Assistant Deputy Minister
Phone: (780) 427-4095 Fax: (780) 422-0818 e-mail: laurie.beveridge@gov.ab.ca

- Supports a fair and effective marketplace for consumers and businesses by administering and enforcing consumer-related legislation.
- Co-ordinates the provision of land title services under the Torrens System of land registration.

Service Alberta and Registries

Wilma Haas, Assistant Deputy Minister
Phone: (780) 415-6090 Fax: (780) 422-8151 e-mail: wilma.haas@gov.ab.ca Website: www.servicealberta.ca

- Leads a cross-ministry initiative to make it easier for Albertans to obtain government information and services using their choice of delivery channels.
- Ensures the delivery and accessibility of motor vehicles, personal property, vital statistics and corporate registry and licensing services.

Utilities Consumer Advocate

Laurie Beveridge, Assistant Utilities Consumer Advocate
Phone: (780) 644-5130 Fax: (780) 644-5129 e-mail: laurie.beveridge@gov.ab.ca

- Provides a voice for Albertans to ensure their questions and concerns about the restructured electricity and natural gas markets are heard and effectively addressed.
- Works directly with other consumer organizations to represent consumers with a strong, credible voice before the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board.

Government and Program Support Services

Tom Thackeray, Assistant Deputy Minister
Phone: (780) 415-5852 Fax: (780) 427-1120 e-mail: tom.thackeray@gov.ab.ca

- Administers the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and provides support to public bodies who are required to comply with the act.
- Provides support for the administration of the *Personal Information Protection Act* and assists ministries across government in managing their information resources. Internal services provided include legislative planning and compliance and accountability.

Ministry Support Services

- The Senior Financial Officer provides business planning, budgeting and financial management services.
- The Chief Information Officer provides direction for information technology initiatives.
- The Public Affairs Bureau and internal resources jointly provide communication services.
- The Director of Human Resources and Administration provides strategic human resource and administrative services.
- Legal services are provided by Alberta Justice and Attorney General.

Operational Overview

Information and service programs provided by Government Services touch the lives of Albertans on a daily basis. The ministry helps Albertans conduct diverse personal and business transactions through its registration and licensing services. Whenever Albertans apply for or renew their Alberta driver's licence, register or search for information on land titles or apply for a birth certificate, they rely on our Government Services to protect their interests.

The ministry's acclaimed consumer legislation is key in promoting confidence in a fair and effective Alberta marketplace. This legislation goes hand-in-hand with effective enforcement and consumer education and awareness programs. Together these programs help to ensure that fewer Albertans become the target of unscrupulous business practices.

Albertans' interests and complaints are also being addressed through the office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate, which was established to bring forward consumer concerns and provide user-friendly information to assist Albertans in responding to the restructured utility marketplace. Specifically, the Utilities Consumer Advocate participates in regulatory proceedings, facilitates the handling of complaints and co-ordinates consumer education.

The ministry also provides support and guidance to provincial and local public bodies and the private sector to ensure that the personal information of Albertans is protected and they are able to request access to information.

In delivering these programs, the ministry has developed a tradition of service excellence. That commitment extends to promoting the corporate goals and strategic directions of the provincial government.

The ministry's commitment to continually seek out the best ways to meet client needs is demonstrated in its vision: **Albertans served with excellence through innovative leadership.**

The ministry's strong client focus is further outlined in its mission statement: **Serving Albertans by promoting a fair marketplace, providing effective access to government information and services, and protecting privacy.**

To this end, the ministry engages in the following two core businesses:

1. Support a fair and effective marketplace in Alberta.
2. Lead service improvement initiatives on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Core Business 1
Support a fair and effective marketplace

One of the key components of this core business is the innovative delivery of licensing and registry services through private sector partnerships, government offices and Internet access. Demand for these services continues to grow in relation to Alberta's prosperous economy. Specifically, in 2004-05, the ministry processed more than 15.2 million business transactions including vehicle registrations, driver's licence applications and land titles registrations on behalf of Alberta consumers and businesses. The ministry supports Alberta's marketplace activities by ensuring these licensing and registry services are accessible, secure, accurate and competitively priced.

The other important aspect of this core business relates to the education and protection of consumers. Information and services are provided to both consumers and businesses to enhance their awareness and understanding of fair business practices. As well, the ministry creates and enforces consumer protection legislation such as the *Fair Trading Act*. The ministry also communicates with other jurisdictions – nationally and internationally – so that potential marketplace issues may be proactively identified and resolved, protecting consumers against fraud and other losses.

The Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA) is an additional initiative within the ministry aimed at ensuring Alberta's utility market is fair and effective. The UCA was established to promote understanding of the restructured electricity and natural gas markets and to ensure Albertans' concerns and complaints are heard and effectively addressed.

Core Business 2

Lead service improvement initiatives on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Some of the services provided under this core business support Albertans directly, while others promote the overall efficiency and effectiveness of government departments and public bodies.

One program that benefits Albertans directly is the Service Alberta initiative, which aims to improve their access to government information and services. This is a key service initiative that the ministry leads on behalf of the Government of Alberta with the co-operation of other ministries. When fully implemented, Albertans will be able to choose how and when they want to access services and will benefit from consistent and secure information and transaction processing.

Albertans also benefit from effective access to information and the protection of their privacy. Specifically, the ministry promotes and administers legislation such as the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP) and the new *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA).

Assistance is also provided to other ministries in effectively managing their information resources.

> Support for Government of Alberta Goals.

Through its core businesses and associated ministry programs, Government Services plays a key role in supporting the following Government of Alberta goals:

Alberta will have a prosperous economy – The ministry works to promote consumer confidence in a fair marketplace, which is critical to stimulating business transactions and a prosperous economy. By providing a diverse scope of licensing and registry services, the ministry also supports Albertans as they conduct a myriad of everyday business transactions (e.g., start a business, acquire a loan or purchase a vehicle or land).

Alberta will be a fair and safe place to work, live and raise families – The ministry's consumer protection legislation establishes the framework for a fair and safe marketplace and includes educational and enforcement activities to protect those who are most vulnerable to fraud (e.g., seniors, youth).

As well, registry information is a key resource that supports law enforcement and transportation safety initiatives to promote the safety and security of Albertans.

Government Services has also taken important measures to protect the personal identity of Albertans by continuing to strengthen the security components of Alberta's driver's licence and by providing other awareness tools.

Alberta's children and youth will be supported in reaching their potential – The Vital Statistics registry maintains secure and accurate birth records that enable children to be registered for various government services. As well, other registry systems support the provincial maintenance enforcement program, which helps ensure that court-ordered financial benefits for children are received.

Alberta will have a financially stable, open and accountable government and a strong intergovernmental position in Canada – Through the ministry's leadership of the Service Alberta initiative, Albertans are gaining improved access to government information and services while choosing the service delivery channel they prefer.

As well, the ministry supports the goal of government openness and accountability by improving information management and by providing Albertans with access to information while protecting their privacy. ■

Performance Highlights

A commitment to providing excellent customer service topped the ministry's list of achievements in 2004-05. The ministry met the majority of its performance targets despite challenges due to continued increases in the volume of transactions and the public's demand for services.

Particularly rewarding was the increase in public satisfaction with land title registration services, which rose to 77 per cent from 65 per cent a year ago. The significant increase in satisfaction can be attributed to the additional staff resources obtained to improve capacity and process additional transactions. This increase in satisfaction is especially encouraging given the record registration volumes (i.e., up five per cent from 2003-04; up nine per cent from 2002-03; 23 per cent from 2001-02; and 36 per cent from 2000-01). As well, client satisfaction with the consumer call centre and registry agent services remained high at 77 per cent and 86 per cent respectively.

Client satisfaction ratings for other registry and consumer services ranged between 72 per cent and 83 per cent, demonstrating that service excellence remains a high priority for the ministry. Moreover, in addition to the high standard of registry services provided, Albertans continue to enjoy extremely competitive fees for licensing and registration products.

Three of the performance measures that fell short of their targets are related to the Utilities Consumer Advocate. The performance measures were centred on awareness of services provided, overall customer satisfaction and satisfaction with the interveners' protocol. The lower-than-hoped-for results reflect the somewhat ambitious targets for a new/unknown entity (established in November 2003) and the often complex and technical nature of the restructured retail electricity marketplace. To address these shortfalls, a comprehensive awareness project aimed at raising Albertans' understanding of the restructuring and the role of and the services offered by the Advocate's office will be undertaken beginning in 2005-06.

Awareness and overall customer satisfaction were also measures employed for the Service Alberta initiative. Fairly high targets had been set for this area and, in spite of improved performance, the ministry was unable to meet these targets, due in part to a lack of marketing and resources.

Access to information targets related to FOIP requests were both exceeded – 94 per cent of FOIP requests were completed by government bodies within 60 days or less and 95 per cent were handled without complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

In addition to its success in meeting the majority of its performance targets, the ministry had a number of other significant accomplishments:

- Implemented the facial recognition component of the new, secure driver's licence, allowing the ministry to identify potential cases of identity fraud and detect/correct any processing errors.
- Continued to make progress in renewing the Personal Property, Land Titles and Motor Vehicle registries under the Registries Renewal Initiative (RRI). Specifically, online search services were implemented for Land Titles, enhanced interfaces were built to simplify the connection of other systems' access to the Motor Vehicle registry and construction began on the new Personal Property registry.
- Collaborated with law enforcement agencies, consumer groups and the private sector to develop a national identity theft kit that can be used to protect customer data. The kit will help businesses develop secure information management practices such as collecting only essential data from customers; obtaining consent when they collect data; encrypting data on networks, laptops and remote access devices; frequently updating security software; conducting employee background checks; and shredding all sensitive documents.
- Helped victims of identity theft by developing a single universal identity theft statement that can be used by victims to notify most major creditors. A single standard form will help streamline the process of correcting credit reports, notifying banks, retailers and credit card issuers that ID fraud is suspected.
- Amended the *Residential Tenancies Act* to clarify the process for tenants to move out of unhealthy or unsafe housing, prohibit tenants from objecting if they're being evicted for not paying rent and allow landlords to return security deposits by regular mail. A voluntary code of practice was developed to help landlords and tenants interpret the *Residential Tenancies Act* and reduce disputes.
- Represented electricity and natural gas consumers at Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) hearings and, in collaboration with other interveners, achieved approximately $98 million in reductions to proposed electricity and natural gas rates.

- Assisted more than 2,000 Albertans with concerns about retail electricity and natural gas service and resolved issues with incorrect bills and customer-service issues.
- Issued more than 4,000 copies of the Electricity and Natural Gas Contracts booklet to help inform consumers of their rights and obligations.
- Implemented a joint initiative with Credit Counselling Services of Alberta to support Albertans who are experiencing financial hardship in paying their utility bills.
- Enhanced business awareness and understanding of the new *Personal Information Protection Amendment Act* (PIPA) by establishing a dedicated website, an information line and various informative publications.
- Developed the cross-government content management system on the Service Alberta website and provided leadership in planning the cross-government implementation.
- Implemented government-wide service standards and provided training and support to other ministries as part of the Service Alberta initiative.
- Co-operated with the Royal Canadian Legion to develop and introduce a special veterans' licence plate to honour Alberta's many veterans.
- Prepared amendments to the *Business Corporations Act* to ensure that Alberta retains a competitive advantage and to address other pressures such as economic globalization. These amendments include the registration of unlimited liability corporations in Alberta. Alberta and Nova Scotia are the only jurisdictions in Canada to allow for the registration of these entities.
- Received a Bronze Premier's Award of Excellence for the ministry's Consumer Services program, which exemplified an outstanding work unit.

- Service Alberta and Alberta Registries won three American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) Awards.
    - 2005 Regional PACE Awards (Two categories)
      Internal/external video or CD-ROM
      – Security Awareness Training (Four video set)
      Marketing Campaign-Private/Public Partnership
      – Fraudulent Document Kit
    - 2005 International PACE Award
      Marketing Campaign-Private/Public Partnership
      – Fraudulent Document Kit

Further details of these and other accomplishments are provided in the Results Analysis section. ■

Financial Highlights

Results of Operations

The following illustrates our financial performance for the year:

2004–05 Financial Analysis ($000)

	Authorized Budget	Actuals	Variance	
			$	Explanations
Revenue	328,711	350,673	21,962	Higher motor vehicle and land title transactions, as well as higher real estate values.
Expenditures				
• Voted Operating Expense	78,822	76,189	2,633	The ministry received authorization to transfer $2.2 million from operating to capital to address timing differences in the purchase of equipment for the Registries Renewal Initiative and the refinement of criteria used to classify capital assets. The balance of the change is primarily due to increases in human resources costs such as salary settlements, increased pension costs and the cost of 16 additional Land Titles staff.
• Voted Capital Expenditure	4,134	6,310	(2,176)	
• Statutory Expense	111	355	(244)	Impact on provision for vacation pay of additional FTEs and increased salary rates.
Total Expenditures	83,067	82,854	213	

Revenues

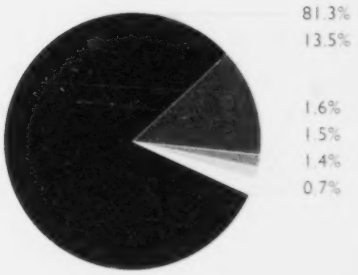
The Ministry's primary sources of revenue are from fees and licences relating to the following:

- Motor Vehicles
- Land Titles and related services
- Personal Property
- Corporate Registrations (*Business Corporations Act*)
- Vital Statistics

The amount of revenue collected is impacted by various factors such as the economic health of the province and changes in population. These factors impact the volume of sales and in some cases the amount of the fee charged. For example, the fee for registering a land title includes a fixed fee plus a sliding fee based on the market value of the real estate or mortgage.

Proposed changes in government fees require legislative or regulatory amendments as well as authorization from the appropriate government body (i.e., Standing Policy Committee, Treasury Board) and consultation with stakeholders. In 2004-05, there were no fee changes.

Source of 2004–05 Revenue
(millions of dollars)



81.3% Driver's Licence & Motor Vehicles Fees ($285.1)

13.5% Land Titles Fees ($47.2)

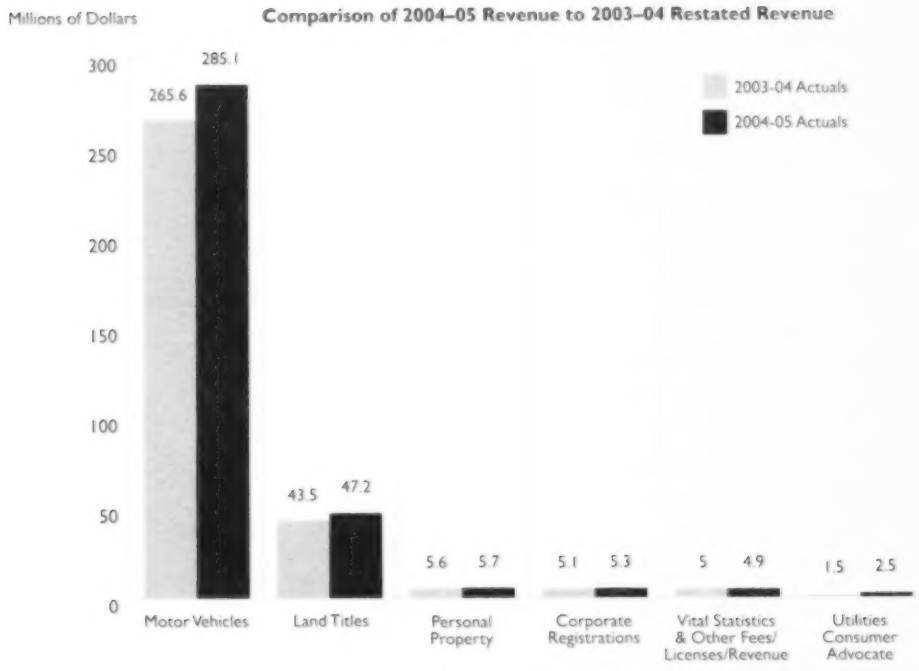
1.6% Personal Property ($5.7)

1.5% Corporate Registrations ($5.3)

1.4% Vital Statistics & Other Fees/Licences/Revenue ($4.9)

0.7% Utilities Consumer Advocate ($2.5)

The ministry also received revenue from industry contributions in support of the Utilities Consumer Advocate. In 2004-05, $2.5 million was contributed with 80 per cent funded through the Balancing Pool (section 148 of the *Electric Utilities Act*) and the balance by the province's three natural gas distributors (section 28.1 of the *Gas Utilities Act*).



The majority of the ministry's fees and licence revenue was generated through the sale of registrations, licensing and search services associated with the Motor Vehicle Registry, which is the largest of the five registries. Services are delivered through 224 neighbourhood registry agents across the province. As well, some services are offered online through the Internet.

Motor vehicle-related revenues increased by $19.5 million over 2003-04 primarily due to increases in transaction volumes for commercial vehicle registrations (18,000) and passenger vehicle registrations (86,400). Revenue from operator licences also increased, mainly because of changes in the reporting criteria for unearned revenue.

Land Titles registration and searches services generated $47.2 million or more than 13 per cent of total revenue. Government offices in Edmonton and Calgary provide examination and registration-related services while

registry agents provide land title searches, historical searches and certified copies of land titles. In addition, SPIN II provides businesses with an opportunity to conduct online searches and registrations through a subscription service.

The $3.7-million land titles revenue increase over 2003-04 was attributable to increases in the volume of land-related transactions, as well as escalating property values. Specifically, there were 122,000 more registrations and 193,000 more searches than in the prior year. Revenue from search transactions performed through the former Electronic Gateway in prior years have been more appropriately recognized as Land Titles revenue in this report and accompanying financial statements.

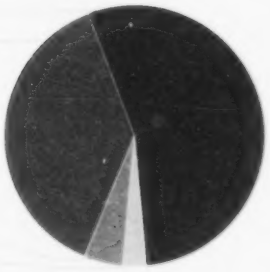
A further $5.7 million of revenue comes from the Personal Property Registry, which provides online registration and search services for claims against personal property. The term personal property is used to describe consumer goods such as motor vehicles, household and personal items, industrial or farming equipment and aircraft. It also includes property other than land, chattel paper, securities and documents of title, instruments, money or intangibles. Services related to this registry are delivered by the registry agent network as well as through Registries Online. Revenue from personal property registrations and searches had a moderate increase of $0.1 million over 2003-04.

The *Business Corporations Act* guides the incorporation and registration of all corporations, business names and extra-provincial corporations. Authorized service providers, including registry agents, law firms, accounting firms and search houses provide these services. Revenues increased $0.2 million over 2003-04 and represent $5.3 million of the ministry's 2004-05 fees and licence revenue.

An additional $4.6 million in revenue is generated through various other fees and licences including marriage licences, certificates for key event data such as births, deaths, adoptions and name changes, as well as business licences. A further $0.3 million in miscellaneous other revenue was also reported in 2004-05. Overall, revenue from these sources remained relatively stable compared to 2003-04.

The Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA) operates on a cost-recovery basis whereby costs are recorded as revenue for the ministry. Revenue (recovered costs) of $2.5 million was reported in 2004-05, up from the previous year and reflective of the UCA's first full year of operations.

2004–05 Operating Expenses by Category (millions of dollars)



56.7% Supplies and Services ($43.4)

39.7% Manpower ($30.3)

3.0% Amortization of Capital Assets ($2.3)

0.5% Statutory and Valuation ($0.4)

0.1% Other ($0.1)

Expenses

Operating expenses increased by $1.8 million over 2003-04. The additional expense results from:

- The Utilities Consumer Advocate transitioning into its first full year of operations;
- The expansion of Land Titles' service capacity to cope with the demand for real estate transactions;
- Increases in labour costs stemming from salary settlements negotiated with the Alberta Union of Public Employees (AUPE); and
- A required adjustment to pension plan premiums.

The area of greatest expense continues to be the purchase of supplies and services, where 56.7 per cent ($43.4 million) of the budget is directed. Key expenses within this category include contracted services ($14.8 million), Alberta Corporate Services Centre (ACSC) shared services costs ($14.8 million), data processing ($6.6 million) and materials and supplies ($3.5 million). Manpower accounts for 39.7 per cent ($30.3 million) and amortization charges of $2.3 million account for most of the remaining expenses.

In addition to the operating expenses identified above, the ministry directed capital funding of $6.3 million in support of licensing and registration services and information technology improvements.

2004–05 Operating Expenses by Core Business (millions of dollars)

95.5% Fair and Effective Marketplace ($73.1)

4.5% Service Improvement Initiatives ($3.4)

Expenses By Core Businesses

The operating expenses attributed to Core Business 1 – Fair and Effective Marketplace totalled $73.1 million, or 95.5 per cent in 2004–05. The remaining $3.4 million, or 4.5 per cent of operating expenses are attributed to Core Business 2 – Service Improvement Initiatives. The operating resources attributed to the ministry's two core businesses can be further broken down to each of the five goals.

The ministry's first goal, efficient licensing and registration services, accounted for the largest component of operating expense at $61.2 million, or 79.9 per cent. Employing an extensive information and communication technology network, the ministry processes more than 15 million transactions annually on behalf of Alberta consumers and businesses and millions more for law enforcement agencies. Central to this network are the ministry's five registry systems (i.e., Personal

Property, Land Titles, Motor Vehicles, Vital Statistics and Corporate Registries). Several of these systems are nearly 20 years old and their multi-year renewal process continues to be critical to ensuring the security of Albertans' personal information as well as accommodating increasing service volumes, improving client access and convenience and enabling integrated service delivery.

Additional resources were also provided to address the growing demand for these services, particularly within the Land Titles program, which has seen transaction volumes increase by 23 per cent in the past three years. However, sustained increases in demand for other registry services continue to stretch available ministry resources and reduce capacity to meet performance targets.

The ministry dedicated 12.3 per cent of its operating resources to promote a high standard of marketplace conduct. Within this allocation, resources were dedicated to marketplace awareness and educational initiatives; call centre support for consumer enquiries; investigative and enforcement programs; and research and monitoring of emerging issues. Partnerships with other jurisdictions were also undertaken to share knowledge and expertise.

A total of 3.3 per cent of ministry resources was allocated to the Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA), with funding made available through both the Electricity Balancing Pool and provincial natural gas distributors. In its first full year of operations, the UCA worked to represent the interests of residential, rural and small commercial customers in Alberta's restructured retail utility markets.

Government support services promote the effective access to information, protection of privacy and simplification of government regulations. Resources associated with this goal represented 3.3 per cent of total operating expenses.

Expenditures associated with Service Alberta represent only 1.2 per cent of total ministry operating resources. As a cross-ministry initiative, however, some additional funding was provided by other ministries to assist in the identification, planning and co-ordination of projects to improve delivery of and access to government information and services.

Further details on the core business expenses in comparison with the prior year can be found in the Integrated Results Analysis section of this report.

2004–05 Operating Expenses by Goal (millions of dollars)

79.9% Licensing and Registration ($61.2)

12.3% High Standard of Marketplace Conduct ($9.4)

3.3% Government Support ($2.5)

3.3% Utilities Consumer Advocate ($2.5)

1.2% Service Alberta ($0.9)

Expense by Function

Ministries are required to identify, within a common framework, the government functions they support. This information is based on national standards to allow for inter-provincial comparisons and for determining federal funding eligibility. For 2004-05, the ministry identified three functions to which its expenditures could be attributed: protection of people and property; agriculture and economic development; and general government. ■

Operating Expense by Function (millions of dollars)

	2003-04	2004-05			
	Actual	Estimates	Adjustments	Authorized Budget	Actuals
Protection of People & Property	68.9	74.2	(1.8)	72.4	70.5
Agriculture & Economic Development	2.9	3.5	-	3.5	3.3
General Government	2.9	3.0	-	3.0	2.7

Adjustments include Supplementary Estimates, and dedicated revenue shortfalls.

Key Factors Influencing Performance

The ministry set rather challenging performance targets for 2004-05 demonstrating the high degree of commitment to service excellence. Two key factors had a significant impact on the results achieved:

- Increasing client demand/increasing expectations; and
- Ability to raise awareness of ministry services.

Increasing client demand/expectations – As Alberta consumers continue to become more knowledgeable and take advantage of new technology, demand increases for high levels of service from both the private sector and government. These expectations include enhanced service delivery options and hours, as well as speedier response times. To maintain satisfaction levels at the high ratings Government Services has been able to attain in the past requires the investment of additional human and technical resources. An example of the ministry's success in this area is the dramatic increase in satisfaction ratings for Land Titles upon receiving funding for new staff. To maintain this upward trend and meet satisfaction targets in the 80 per cent range, the ministry will have to continue to look for opportunities to direct resources to other areas pressured by significant growth in demand. It must also capitalize on its ongoing investment in the Registries Renewal Initiative to bring about improvements in service delivery.

Meeting client expectations is also challenging in areas where the ministry does not have direct control over the ability to resolve client issues/concerns. One example is consumer investigations where the outcome may be fair, even if it is not resolved in favour of the client. As well, callers concerned with high energy prices may expect that the Utilities Consumer Advocate has the ability to reduce their utility bills. In these situations, regardless of the level of service provided, there may be some overall dissatisfaction based upon the perceived outcome of the interaction. Ongoing efforts will focus on ensuring clients are aware at the outset of the assistance that can and cannot be provided.

Developing Greater Awareness of Ministry Services – Albertans' awareness of ministry services represents another area of challenge. Both the Utilities Consumer Advocate and Service Alberta made great strides in enhancing the awareness of their services and mandate. However, performance targets were not met because of limited resources available to dedicate to public awareness campaigns. Improving the awareness ratings will remain a challenge and the ministry will look for innovative ways to address this issue, as well as continue to direct as many resources as possible to this area. ■

AUDITOR GENERAL *Alberta*

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

On the Results of Applying Specified Auditing Procedures to Key Performance Measures

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly:

In connection with the Ministry of Government Services performance measures included in the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Ministry, I have:

1. Agreed information from an external organization to reports from the organization.

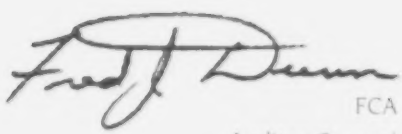
2. Agreed information from reports that originated within the Ministry to source reports. In addition, I tested the procedures used to compile the underlying data into the source reports.

3. Checked that the presentation of results is consistent with the stated methodology.

4. Checked that the results presented are comparable to stated targets, and information presented in prior years.

5. Checked that the performance measures, as well as targets, agree to and include results for all of the measures presented in Budget 2004.

As a result of applying the above procedures, I found no exceptions. These procedures, however, do not constitute an audit and therefore I express no opinion on the performance information included in the 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Ministry of Government Services.



FCA
Auditor General

Edmonton, Alberta
July 29, 2005

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Goal 1: Efficient Licensing and Registration Services.

Core Business – Support a fair and effective marketplace.

Overview

The ministry's registration and licensing services continue to support Albertans in conducting diverse personal and business transactions. Whenever Albertans apply for or renew their Alberta driver's licence, register or search for information on land titles or apply for a birth certificate, they are accessing some of the many services and products offered by the ministry.

Registration and licensing services are delivered through a variety of channels designed to meet the unique needs of Albertans. The Registry Agent Network is the primary service provider, with 224 community-based business locations that provide registration and search services for Motor Vehicles, Personal Property, Corporate Registry, Vital Statistics and some Land Titles transactions. Albertans may also renew their vehicle registration through the Internet at a time convenient to them.

The Registries Online (ROL) service is ideal for businesses that conduct a high volume of registration and search transactions pertaining to Personal Property, Corporate Registry and some Land Titles activities.

Government offices handle the more technical, complex and sensitive registry transactions. Specifically, the ministry's offices in Edmonton and Calgary process land title registrations, special motor vehicle services, highly complex Corporate Registry filings and business licensing activities.

Licensing and Registration (millions of dollars)

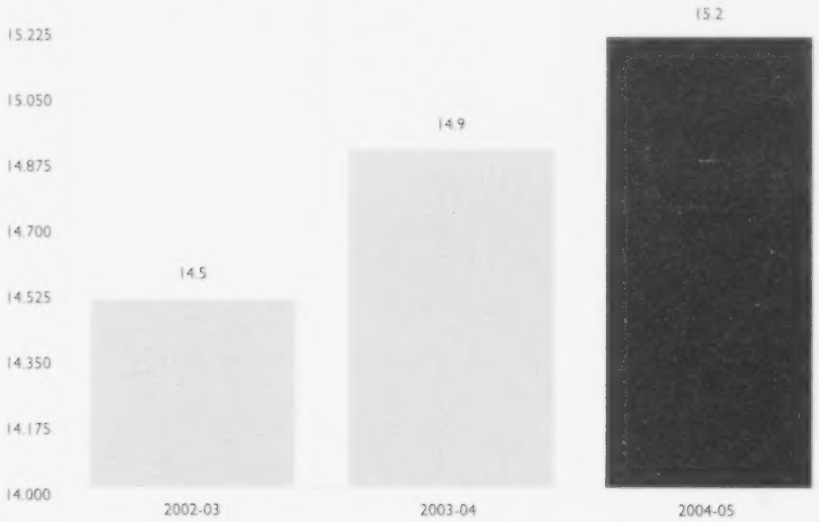
79.9% ($61.2)

Providing licensing and registry services and the extensive information and communication infrastructure that it requires, consumed 79.9 per cent ($61.2 millions) of the ministry's 2004-05 operating expense.

Activities/Achievements

> Quality information and services are accessible, secure, accurate and reasonably priced.

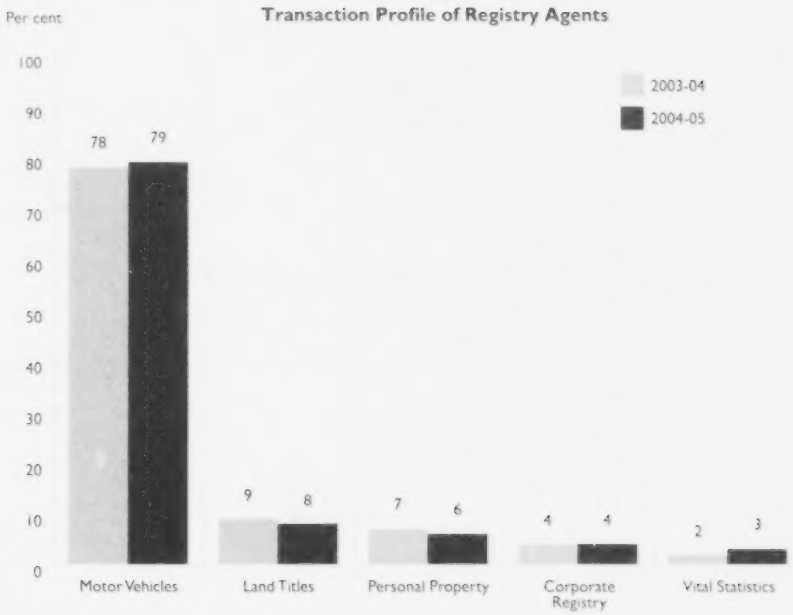
- Processed more than 15.2 million transactions through the ministry's registry systems on behalf of Alberta consumers and businesses — 300,000 more transactions than in the previous year.



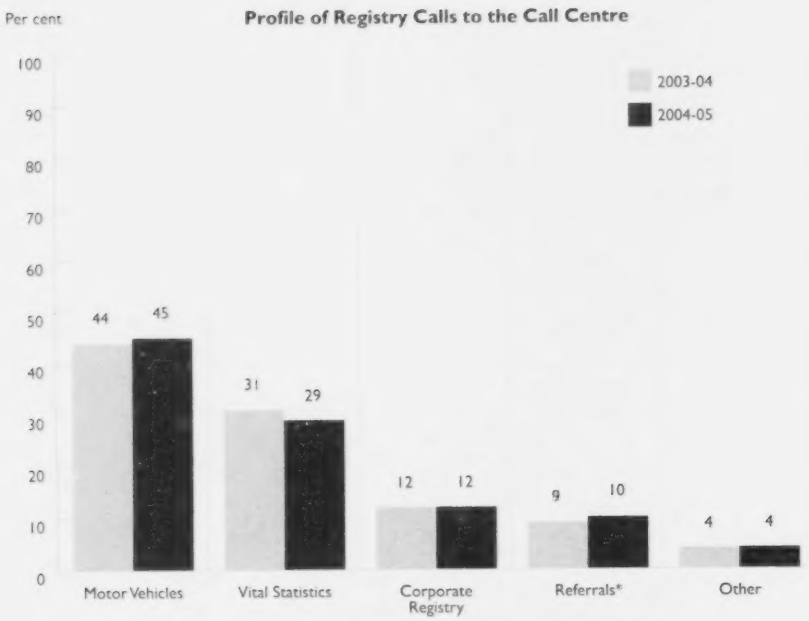
- Continued to address escalating demands for Land Title registrations which had caused increased turnaround times. Land Titles has hired and trained additional staff to assist in maintaining the best turnaround times in the country despite record registration volumes that increased to more than one million in 2004-05.

> Alberta's Registry Agent Offices

- Managed the Registry Agent Network located in nearly every city and major rural area across the province. The registry agents' primary source of business (i.e., 79 per cent) continues to be motor vehicles transactions.



- Answered nearly 95,000 calls related to the ministry's licensing and registration services, 45 per cent of which were related to motor vehicles. As indicated in the following exhibit, vital statistics inquiries also account for a large proportion of contacts to the call centre (29 per cent).



*Referrals: Calls transferred to other government agencies or non-government agencies due to the specific call requirements.

- Successfully implemented the facial recognition component of our award-winning Alberta driver's licence, still deemed the most secure document of its type in North America. Implementation resulted in more than 550,000 driver's licence images being compared against the existing photo image on file. This has allowed the ministry to identify 17 cases where a fraudulent name was used as well as detect and correct potential processing errors. Because of this technology, criminal charges were laid or are pending in several cases.
- Co-ordinated initiatives to further enhance registry security and protect personal identity:
    - Enhanced the security model for the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) interface to improve law enforcement access to motor vehicle information.
    - Developed registry agent security awareness training to ensure agents are better informed and trained to recognize fraudulent documents.
    - Collaborated with Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in their review of the security framework for driver's licence/ID cards.

- Worked with the Vital Statistics Council of Canada to develop and implement national standards for more secure documents (e.g., birth certificate) and on automating the cross-referencing of death records across jurisdictions to improve the security of vital statistics documents.
- Participated on the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Identity In Canada to develop a policy framework to govern documentation of individual identity and facilitate implementation of the framework.

- Continued to make progress in renewing the Personal Property, Land Titles and Motor Vehicle Registries under the Registries Renewal Initiative (RRI):
  - Implemented online search services for more than 18.5 million land title registered documents, volume (bulk) data services; replaced microfilming with digital document imaging.
  - Built electronic interfaces to simplify the connection for systems that need to communicate with the legacy Motor Vehicle system. For 2004-05, this includes TraCS (Traffic and Criminal Software) links for Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation (AIT) and selected law enforcement agencies. Also included are links to AIT vehicle inspection stations and to the Personal Property database for lien data.
  - Finalized the system requirements for the automation of medical information to provide more convenient, appropriate and secure access for medical professionals, registry agents and Driver Fitness and Monitoring examiners. Construction of the system is under way.
  - Finalized the Personal Property system requirements and began the construction of the system. The Personal Property Registry will provide enhanced registration and search services in the fourth quarter of 2005-06.
  - Finalized the system requirements and began construction of common services (i.e., security, audit, stakeholder repository, product distribution and service catalogue components).
- Utilized the SPIN 2 system to the benefit of other provincial agencies. Implemented access to survey field notes for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

- Honoured Alberta's veterans by introducing a veterans' licence plate that can be used on vehicles with passenger class registration (e.g., passenger cars, SUVs, station wagons, minivans, motor homes and light trucks) and farm vehicle registrations. The Royal Canadian Legion determines who is eligible for the special plate.
- Partnered with the registry agents, Carfax and CarProof, two private firms that provide vehicle history information from both Canada and the United States, to help provide used-car buyers with more information on vehicles they may wish to purchase.
- Assisted Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation in the creation of the Traffic Safety Plan, co-operated with the Alberta Vehicle Theft Committee and assisted in the preparation of Advanced Road Test as part of the Graduated Driver's Licence program.
- Continued to support the Maintenance Enforcement Program by withholding registry services for delinquent account holders and registered maintenance orders on the Personal Property Registry.
- Licensed 6,534 Alberta businesses and responded to more than 3,400 related phone calls.

Are you starting a business? *The following businesses are directly licensed or registered by Government Services. Visit www.gov.ab.ca/gs for more information:*

- *Auctions*
- *Commercial Cemeteries*
- *Cemeteries and Mausoleums (registered)*
- *Cemetery Pre-need Contract Sales*
- *Cemetery Pre-need Contract Salespeople*
- *Charitable Organizations*
- *Collection Agencies*
- *Collectors*
- *Co-operatives*
- *Direct (Door-to-Door) Sellers*
- *Electricity Marketers*
- *Employment Agencies*
- *Fund-raising Businesses*
- *Natural Gas Direct Marketers*
- *Prepaid Contractors*
- *Retail Home Sales (mobile homes, modular homes and packaged homes)*
- *Travel Clubs*

Government Services also maintains legislation for the following strategic partners to license specific businesses:

- *Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) licenses the automotive industry (sales, leasing, repair and consignment sales).*
- *Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board licenses funeral service providers (businesses, directors, embalmers, pre-arranged funeral plans and crematories).*
- *Real Estate Council of Alberta (RECA) licenses real estate agents, brokers and property managers.*

> Legislation meets ever-changing needs.

- Worked with more than 300 co-operatives to assist them in meeting the continuance requirements of the *Cooperatives Act*. Amended the *Cooperatives Regulation* to allow co-operatives to either revive their operations to continue under the new *Cooperatives Act* or to wind up their affairs.
- Consulted with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation to amend motor vehicle legislation and improve commercial driver competency testing.
- Amended the *Business Corporations Act* to enable incorporation of unlimited liability corporations and to harmonize with recent amendments to federal legislation.
- Managed access agreements regarding the *Access to Motor Vehicle Information Regulation*, which maintains a balance between privacy concerns and legitimate information requirements.
- Amended the *Personal Property Security Regulation* to facilitate removal of nuisance registrations (e.g., false allegations, unsubstantiated registrations).
- Consulted with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation on proposed regulation changes for the Dealer Plate Program, registration requirements for transient workers and change of address requirements for driver's licences and vehicle registrations when address changes are driven by Canada Post.

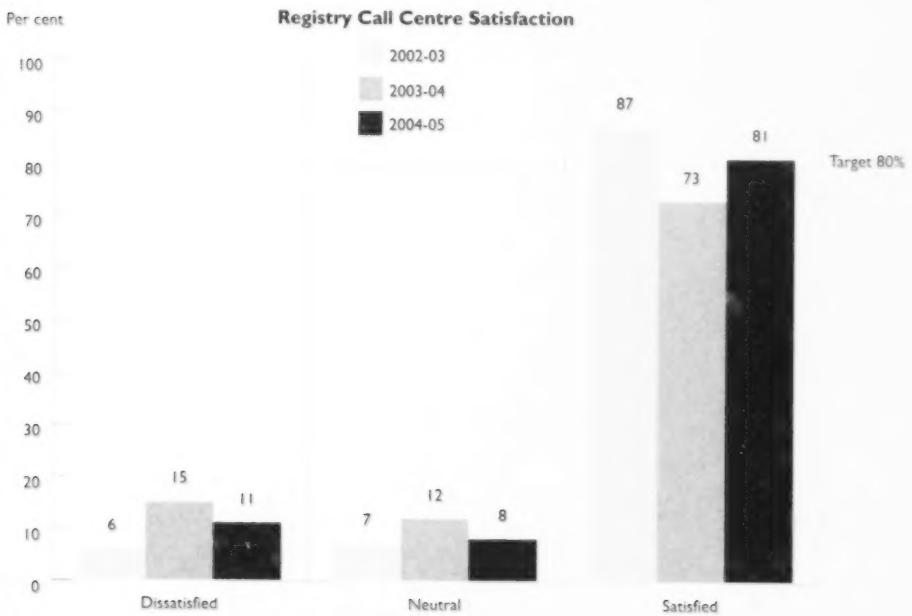
Performance Measure: Percentage of Ministry Call Centre clients (registry-related) who are "satisfied overall" with the quality of service.

> Description

The Government Services call centre responds to inquiries related to registry transactions as well as questions related to consumer issues. In demonstrating the ministry's commitment to customer service, this measure focuses on client satisfaction with respect to registry-related calls. These inquiries include questions on available registry products (e.g., vital statistics certificates, driver's licences, vehicle registration), business licensing and corporate registry requirements.

> Results

81 per cent (key performance measure) satisfaction with the registry-related services provided, which exceeds the target of 80 per cent and significantly improves upon the previous year's results.



Source : 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05 Synovate Research.

> Analysis

More than 95,000 calls were answered, an increase of approximately three per cent or 2,500 calls from the prior year. Based on increased call volumes, as well as the more complex nature of the inquiries, the call system process was reviewed in 2003-04 to identify opportunities to improve service. For example, staff were cross-trained to more effectively handle the diverse nature of registry-related calls. As well, staff were coached on call centre best practices that support more effective issue resolution. These efforts allowed the ministry to not only meet its target, but also significantly increase satisfaction over the prior year.

Performance Measure: Percentage of customers who are "satisfied overall" with services provided by:

- Registry Agents
- Land Titles Offices
- Online Registry Services

> Description

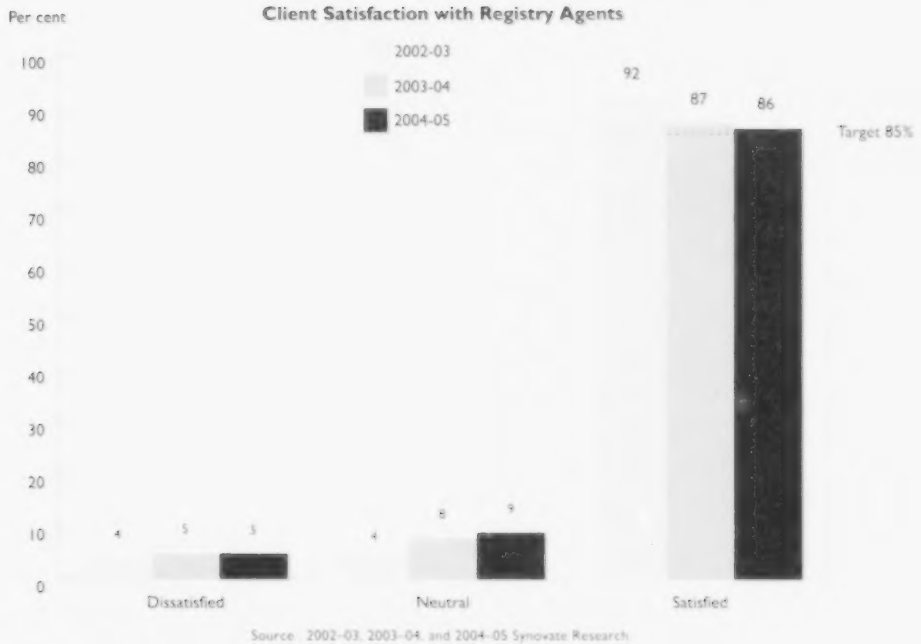
Client satisfaction with services provided through the registry agents, Land Titles offices and online registry services represents a key measure for the ministry's goal of efficient licensing and registration services. Reinforcing the commitment to service excellence, target satisfaction rates for registry agents and Land Titles offices are quite high at 85 per cent and 80 per cent respectively. As the online registry services measure employed a revised methodology in 2004-05, no target was set for that year.

> Results

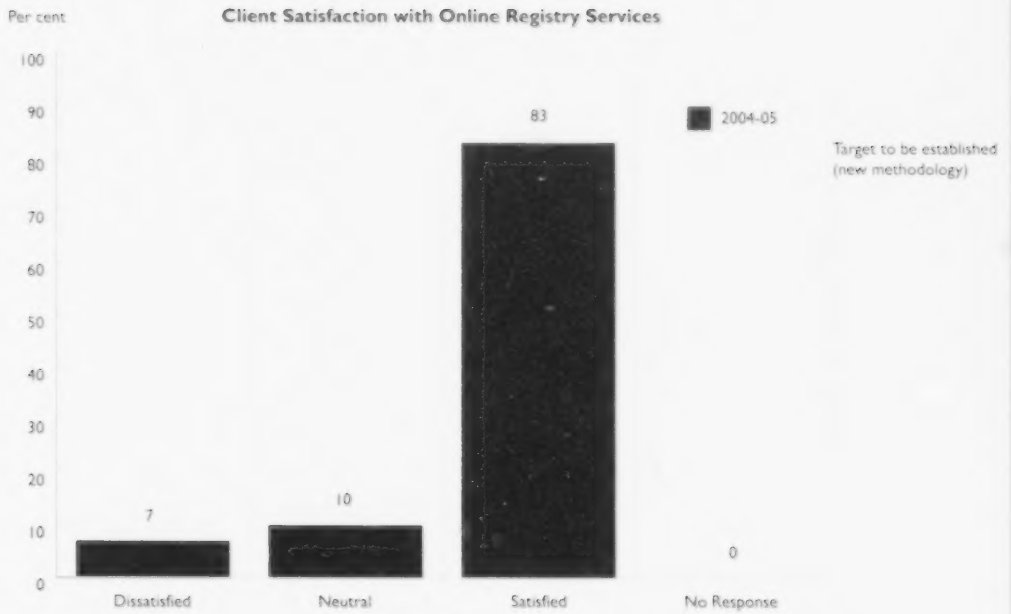
Results for this measure are:

- Registry Agents: **86 per cent (key performance measure)** satisfaction with the service provided.
- Online Registry Services: **83 per cent (baseline result)** satisfaction with the level of service.
- Land Titles Offices: **77 per cent (key performance measure)** satisfaction with the registration process.

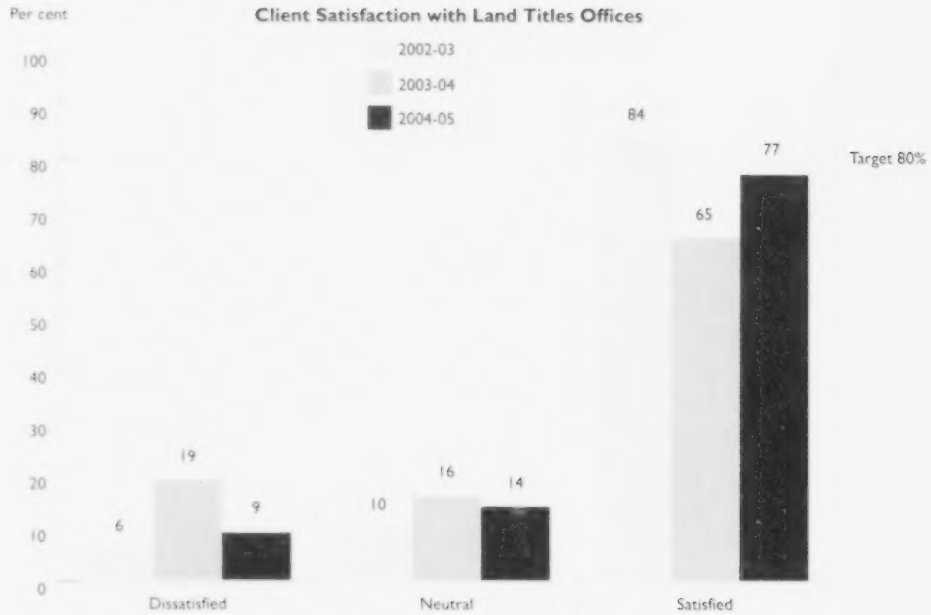
Client satisfaction with services provided by registry agents met the target of 85 per cent while at 77 per cent, satisfaction with Land Titles Offices almost achieved the 80 per cent target.



Source : 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05 Synovate Research



Source : 2004-05 Synovate Research



Source: 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05 Synovate Research.

> Analysis

Customer demand for ministry services continues to escalate while the healthy Alberta economy put pressure on these service delivery channels. In 2004-05, an additional 300,000 registry transactions were processed compared to the prior year (from 14.9 million to 15.2 million).

In spite of surging demand, client satisfaction with registry agents remained strong, exceeding the 85 per cent target. Various agent accreditation and training programs continue to be developed as the ministry works with the agent network to maintain high satisfaction ratings.

The significant increase in satisfaction with Land Titles Offices can be attributed to the additional staff and resources obtained to improve our capacity to process additional transactions and reduce turnaround times. This increase in satisfaction is especially encouraging given the record registration volumes attributed to the increased activity within Alberta's real estate market (i.e., up five per cent from 2003-04, up nine per cent from 2002-03, 23 per cent from 2001-02 and 36 per cent from 2000-01).

Online registry services achieved client satisfaction ratings of 83 per cent. Since a revised methodology was employed, these results are not comparable to previous years, but will be used as a baseline against which future performance is measured.

Land Titles Customer Comments
About Land Titles staff

- *"...Thank you for the excellent service that your office continues to provide. Every time I visit your premises, I am always greeted by friendliness, co-operation and efficiency by all staff that I deal with. I must commend them all on their attitude and work ethic..."*
- *"...I have been practising law now for 27 years and must say that the service we have received from Land Titles staff over the past year has been some of the best that I have experienced during my time of practice..."*
- *"...I wanted to send you this card to express a big THANK YOU for all of your help. You have no idea of how very grateful I am. It isn't very often that you find people who go the extra mile for someone else..."*
- *"...Although we are so often quick to complain when inefficiencies arise, we are not so quick to commend those same people for a job well done and I for one, together with my staff, would like to commend you and the management and staff at the Land Titles Office for a job well done..."*

About SPIN II Delivery System

- *"...I find SPIN II very customer oriented (quick and efficient service). I can request a search any time of the day and receive the results in a matter of seconds. Keep on improving the system!..."*
- *"...The system is very user friendly, provides data at my fingertips and speeds up everything we do. Great job! I can't say enough good things..."*
- *"...I find SPIN II search service a very quick and efficient system. You have instant access to the information needed. It is a great system and now that you can get digital copies of caveats, it's even better..."*
- *"...Nothing is perfect. But online services have been a tremendous progressive move on the part of the Land Titles office. Keep up the good work!"*

About Land Title Systems in Other Jurisdictions

- *"...I regularly use many title/survey websites as our department covers British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Territories. Alberta's website is hands-down the most effective and efficient of all. The accuracy and ease of use should be used as a template for other provinces/territories. Keep up the great work!"*
- *"...Having experienced Ontario's registry system prior to their conversion, Alberta's system has and continues to be a superior and wonderful system to work with..."*
- *"...Keep up the good work. It's 10 times better than B.C. or Saskatchewan...*

Performance Measure: Comparison of Alberta's fees to other jurisdictions for:

- Renew registration on a Ford Taurus sedan/ Dodge Caravan
- Renew a driver's licence

Description

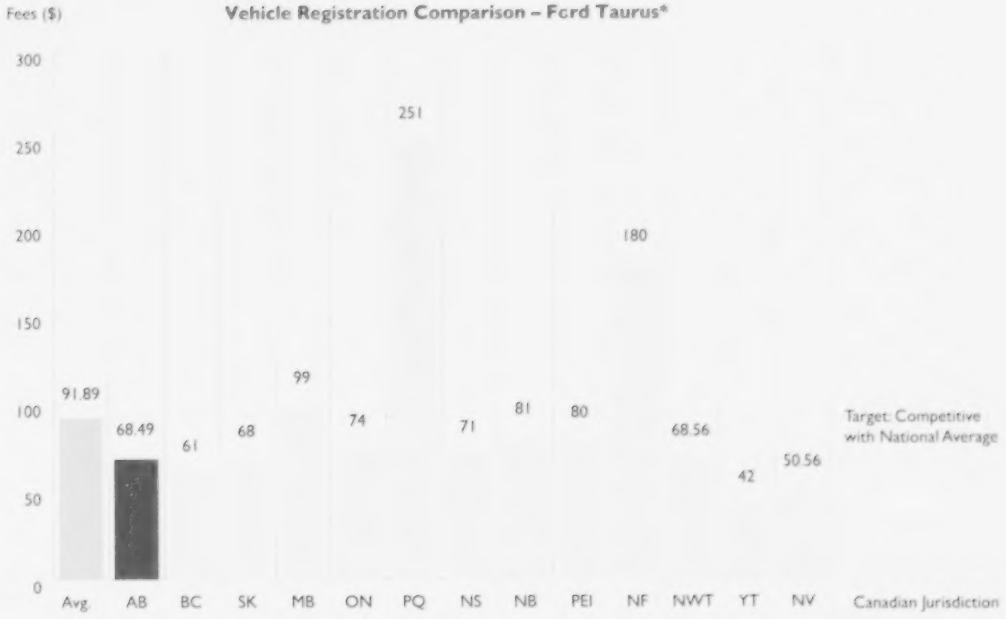
In demonstrating the Alberta Advantage, the ministry works to ensure that Alberta's registry fee structure remains competitive with other Canadian jurisdictions. One area of comparison is the review of Alberta motor vehicle fees, where the cost of registering a vehicle and renewing a driver's licence were compared on a standardized national basis. The target is that Alberta's fees remain competitive with the national average.

Results

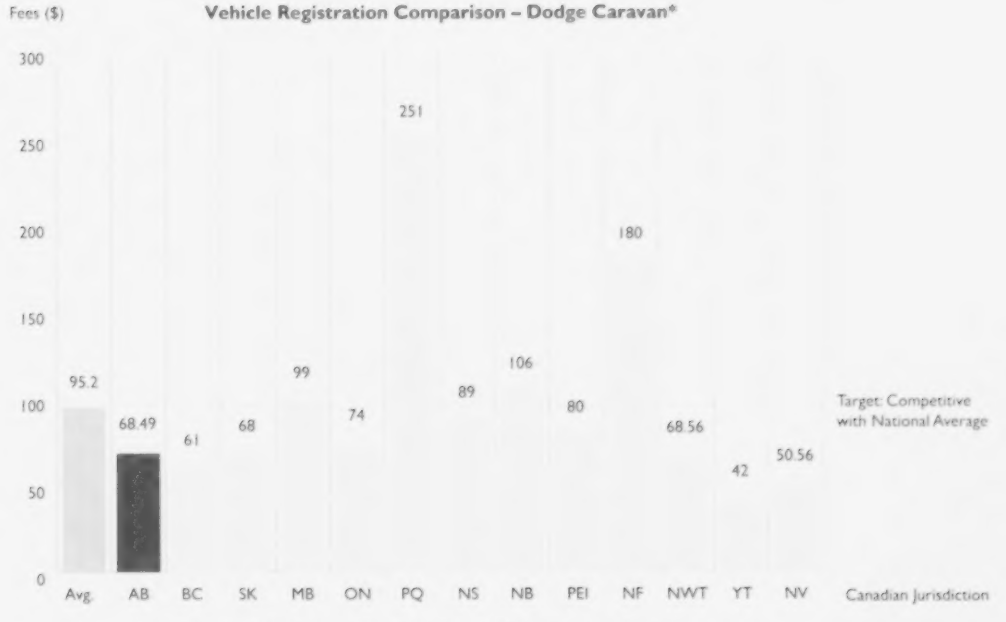
The results of the fee comparison indicated the target has been met as Alberta's fees for these products are competitive with national average.

- The vehicle registration fee for a Ford Taurus:
  25 per cent (key performance measure) below the national average.
  The fee was 22 per cent below in 2003-04.
- The vehicle registration fee for a Dodge Caravan:
  28 per cent below the national average.
- The driver's licence renewal fee:
  30 per cent (key performance measure) below the national average.
  The fee was 25 per cent below in 2003-04.

Please note that "fees" in this analysis represents all associated charges that might be paid by the consumer to acquire the service. This includes all provincial/territorial government fees, taxes and service charges.



Source : 2004-05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons.
*Survey was standardized for comparative purposes to represent the annual fee charged to renew a Ford Taurus sedan weighing 1,494 kilograms in the urban area (includes service/administration fees).



Source : 2004-05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons.
*Survey was standardized for comparative purposes to represent the annual fee charged to renew a Dodge Caravan minivan weighing 1,880 kilograms in the urban area (includes service/administration fees).

Source: 2004-05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons.

*Survey was standardized for comparative purposes to represent the five-year renewal fee for a driver's license with no demerits (includes services/administrative fees) as this represents the renewal option chosen by the majority of Albertans.

> Analysis

Alberta's fees for motor vehicle licensing and registration remain competitive in comparison to other Canadian jurisdictions.

Performance Measure: Comparison of Alberta's fees to other jurisdictions on registration costs associated with purchasing a $150,000 house with a $140,000 mortgage.

> Description

The ministry contributes to Alberta's healthy real estate market by ensuring that Land Titles products are priced competitively with other jurisdictions. While each jurisdiction incorporates different requirements and products in their land registration process, a standardized approach has been developed for this measure that compares a common set of five products required to purchase and register a home with a mortgage. The target is to ensure Alberta's fees[1] remain competitive with the national average.

[1] Please note that "fees" in this analysis represents all associated charges that must be paid by the consumer to acquire the service. This includes all provincial/territorial government fees, taxes and service charges.

> Results

The cost in Alberta for this service (sum of all five products) is $133. At **82 per cent below (key performance measure)** the national average, the target has been met (82 per cent below in 2003–04).

Source: 2004–05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons

> Analysis

Compared to other jurisdictions, Alberta continues to have the lowest overall land title fees, which further promotes a prosperous Alberta economy.

> Results

The cost in Alberta for this service (sum of all five products) is $133. At **82 per cent below (key performance measure)** the national average, the target has been met (82 per cent below in 2003–04).

Source: 2004–05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons.

*Represents the total cost of five provincial/territorial government services typically required to purchase a $150,000 house with a $140,000 mortgage. To ensure comparability, only provinces using the Torrens Land System were included. To reflect the complete end cost to consumers, the cost of provincial land taxes charged in British Columbia ($1,500) Manitoba ($900), Ontario ($1,225), and New Brunswick ($375) has been added to the total government fees.

† Note: The Canadian Council of Land Titles Officials (CLTO) is in the process of adopting this reporting methodology and plans to post their fees in a common fee respository for the use of all jurisdictions.

> Analysis

Compared to other jurisdictions†, Alberta continues to have the lowest overall land title fees, which further promotes a prosperous Alberta economy.

Performance Measure: Comparison of Alberta's fees to other jurisdictions on Collection Agency Licence and Direct Selling Licence

> Description

In this measure, Alberta fees for certain business licences are compared to other Canadian jurisdictions. The licences selected for comparison are those determined to be most reflective of marketplace demand in the province:

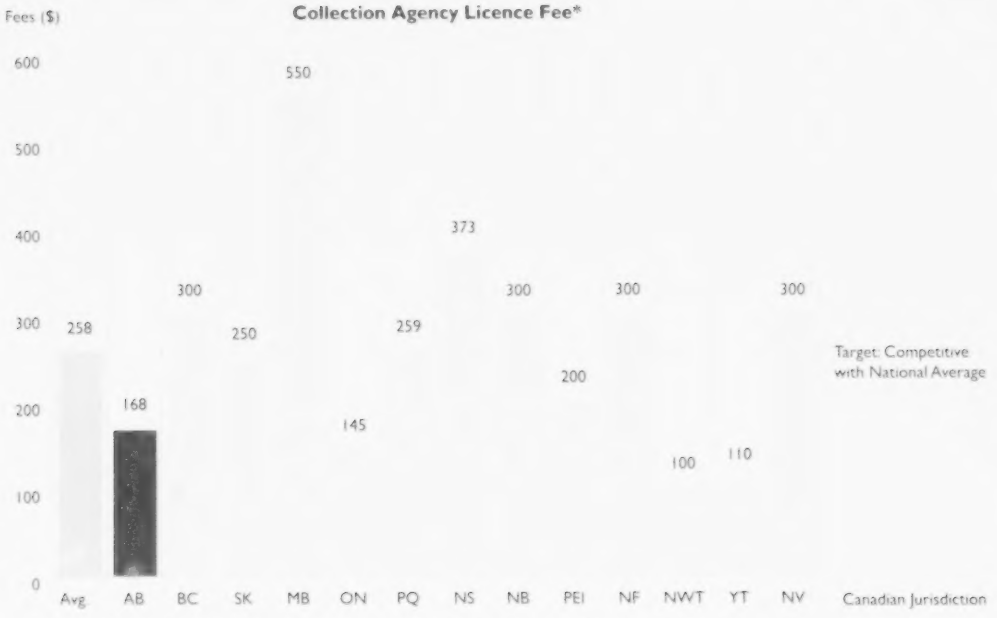
- Collection Agency Licence
- Direct Selling Licence

The target is that Alberta's fees* remain competitive with the national average.

> Results

- Collection Agency Licence fee:
  35 per cent below (key performance measure) the national average. (32 per cent below in 2003–04).
- Direct Selling Licence fee:
  15 per cent below (key performance measure) the national average. (13 per cent below in 2003–04).

These ratings demonstrate that both these fees are competitive with the national average.



Source : 2004–05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons.

* The minimum annual fee charged for a collection agency license in each Canadian jurisdiction (either a new license or a renewal, whichever was lower, regardless of the company size) was compared.

Source : 2004–05 Alberta Government Services Cross-Jurisdictional Comparisons.

* The minimum annual fee for a direct seller license charged to sole proprietors, partnerships, or corporations, as compared across jurisdictions. To ensure comparability, only those jurisdictions who provide a comparable direct sellers license are included.

> Analysis

Alberta's licensing fees continue to be competitive with national averages, which supports a prosperous and business-friendly economy. Over the past year, several jurisdictions have increased their fees, making Alberta's fees even more competitive. ■

Goal 2: Informed consumers and businesses and a high standard of marketplace conduct.

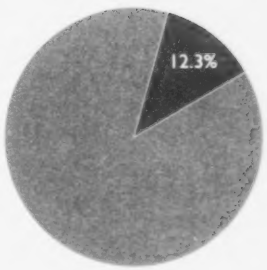
Core Business – Support a fair and effective marketplace in Alberta.

Overview

The ministry continues to educate and protect consumers in order to improve their awareness of marketplace issues and potentially unfair business practices. The ministry also creates, manages and enforces consumer legislation to promote fair and ethical business transactions. While Government Services administers a number of acts and related regulations that guide marketplace activity, the cornerstone legislation continues to be the *Fair Trading Act*.

This legislation is also used in concert with educational programs to promote consumer awareness. Examples include tipsheets on key consumer issues and the provision of services through a toll-free call centre and website. Consumers and businesses receive plain language information on their rights and obligations, which in turn facilitates commerce and fosters a strong marketplace.

High Standard of Marketplace Conduct (millions of dollars)



12.3% ($9.4)

The ministry allocated 12.3 percent ($9.4 million) of its operating expense to carry out the legislative education, monitoring and investigative duties associated with this goal.

Strategic Partners

The ministry also maintains strategic partnerships with the following organizations that regulate specific industries or provide services to consumers:

Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board (www.afsrb.ab.ca) – Licenses, educates, investigates, mediates, enforces and disciplines the funeral industry and its governing legislation.

- *751 licences issued*
- *22 complaints handled*
- *79 inspections completed*

Credit Counselling Services of Alberta (www.creditcounselling.com) – Educates Albertans in personal money management and wise use of credit and provides debt repayment programs such as the Orderly Payment of Debts (OPD) as an alternative to bankruptcy for individuals and families facing financial crises.

- *$11 million repaid to creditors as a result of counselling clients*
- *1,142 OPD files opened*
- *20,882 calls from the public addressed*
- *2,620 assessments of client financial situations to determine options*
- *2,778 participants at workshops*

Real Estate Council of Alberta (www.reca.ab.ca) – Sets and enforces standards of conduct in the real estate industry, protects consumers affected by the industry, provides services that enhance the industry and administers the governing legislation, bylaws and rules.

- *11,574 licences issued*
- *$3.4 million surplus in the Real Estate Assurance Fund*
- *5,261 public calls handled*
- *137 compliance audits on businesses undertaken*
- *102 disciplinary actions taken*

Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (www.amvic.org) – Administers automotive licensing regulations, investigates and mediates automotive complaints and handles inquiries related to the automotive industry.

- *$1.4 million in restitution obtained through mediation by investigators*
- *9,189 complaint calls answered*
- *529 investigation files closed*
- *152 charges laid*
- *Court fines of $34,957*
- *Court-ordered restitution of $639,904*
- *4,603 businesses licensed*
- *6,481 salespeople licensed*
- *492 licences suspended*
- *1,308 individuals took the one-day salesperson training course*

Activities/Achievements

> Strong legislative framework that supports a fair and growing marketplace

- Amended the *Fair Trading Act* to provide added flexibility to address existing and future marketplace issues and address concerns with collection practices, credit repair, public auctions, loan brokering and identity theft.
- Amended the *Residential Tenancies Act* to address concerns from landlords and tenants on returning security deposits, evictions for unpaid rent and landlords' compliance with public health orders.
- Partnered with the Alberta Residential Tenancies Advisory Committee, Alberta Justice, Landlord and Tenant Advisory Boards and the Edmonton and Calgary Apartment Associations to develop a voluntary Code of Practice for landlords and tenants and distributed it to all Alberta libraries.

- Produced and distributed a quick reference guide to provide tenants and landlords with plain language information on the *Residential Tenancies Act* and related regulations.
- Continued development of a policy framework for an *Alternative Dispute Resolution Regulation*, which will help landlords and tenants resolve disputes voluntarily, without resorting to the judicial system.
- Amended the *Law of Property Regulation* to support a level playing field for mortgage insurance.
- Amended the *Real Estate Act* to clarify the intent of the Assurance Fund and preserve the viability of the fund for consumers.

Highlights from our legislation:

Alberta Government Services consumer protection legislation is the foundation that ensures a fair and growing marketplace in Alberta and supports the Government of Alberta's goal of a prosperous economy. The ministry continually reviews and amends legislation to meet emerging consumer needs and issues as they arise.

2004-05 highlights include:

- *Updated Residential Tenancies Act to provide clearer legislation for landlords and tenants.*
- *Amended the Real Estate Act to provide for licensing of property appraisers.*

- Interacted with other jurisdictions nationally and internationally to identify potential marketplace issues or scams that may come to Alberta:
    - Continued to work with Canadian and American law enforcement and consumer agencies to address cross-border deceptive marketing practices affecting consumers (e.g., co-ordinating law enforcement activities and identifying fraudulent and misleading marketing practices).
    - Worked with Alberta Solicitor General, Alberta Justice and eight other provincial ministries as a resource for addressing issues and disseminating information on identity theft.
    - Participated in the Committee on Consumer-Related Measures and Standards (CMC) composed of federal, provincial and territorial officials.

- Worked with the CMC to improve the transparency of air travel price advertising and develop proposals for an effective cross-jurisdictional solution to provide financial safeguards and protection related to the purchase of travel services.
- Co-operated with the Working Group on Identity Theft launched the Identity Theft Information Kit for Business to help businesses protect their clients' personal information.
- Participated in the Working Group on the Alternative Consumer Credit Market to consult with industry and stakeholders and develop a consumer protection framework for the short-term loan industry.
- Worked with the Education Sub-Committee to update the *Canadian Consumer Handbook* 2004.

> Support consumer and business confidence through monitoring and enforcement.

- Completed 1,631 consumer investigations in 2004-05. Prosecutions involving 670 offence counts were concluded and 508 remain pending before the courts. Some 67 warrants remain outstanding on 174 counts. The courts levied fines of $57,094. More than $371,000 was returned to Albertans through court-ordered restitution, bond claims and settlements reached by Government Services staff. Five undertakings were signed.
- Conducted inspections and reviews of 121 businesses – including charities, landlords, consignment dealers, auctions, collection agencies, monument dealers and cemeteries – and two delegated regulatory organizations to determine compliance with disclosure requirements, trust account requirements and effectiveness of the delegated organizations' ability to meet their mandates.
- Conducted 20 reviews of landlords in 2004-05 that identified 11 trust fund shortages.
- Returned $287,000 to trust accounts in the course of investigations and compliance audits in 2004-05.
- Investigated emerging legislative issues (e.g., home warranty programs) to determine appropriate level of industry regulation.
- Established a blue ribbon panel on mortgage fraud and worked with the Real Estate Council of Alberta to develop a mortgage fraud tipsheet.

- Continued national/international co-operative enforcement efforts (e.g., signed memorandum of understanding on the Alberta Partnership Against Cross-border Fraud and conducted cross-border investigations through the Cross-Border Issues Agency Partnership).
- Collaborated with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to shut down a major cross-border telemarketing scam by undertaking surveillance, interviewing witnesses and serving court notices on the company.
- Participated in a joint investigation with the RCMP, U.S. Postal Service and other jurisdictions (United Kingdom, Australia governments) to investigate an Alberta-based company for GST fraud involving tourists.

Holding Money in Trust for Consumer Protection

Trust accounts hold money belonging to Albertans who have:

- *Deposited it with regulated businesses for specified future services, such as prepaid funeral and burial services;*
- *Provided a landlord with a security deposit;*
- *Consigned goods with an auctioneer for sale; or*
- *Given money to a collection agency to pay a debt.*

The trust account ensures the money is set aside for its specific purpose. It cannot be used by the business for its day-to-day expenses and it cannot be seized by creditors if the business fails. The ministry's legislation requires trust accounts to be established and the ministry monitors the accounts, investigates when necessary and works to ensure that money taken on deposit is held securely. Currently, more than $2.3 billion is held in these trust accounts.

Protecting Albertans from Marketplace Violations

Government Services works to ensure a competitive and fair marketplace for consumers and businesses through the Fair Trading Act. The combination of effective consumer legislation and diligent enforcement activities in 2004-05 resulted in:

- *A total of more than 1,631 investigations undertaken;*
- *In excess of $371,000 being returned to consumers; and*
- *More than 595 prosecution counts filed.*

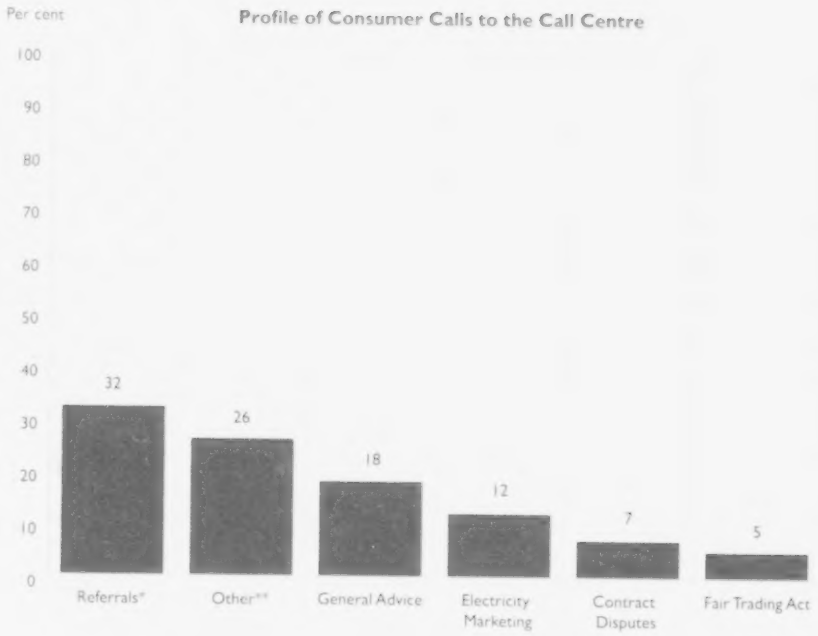
The ministry continues to consult with Albertans on enhancements to keep the act responsive to marketplace issues.

Consumer Legislation and Enforcement At Work

During 2004-05, Consumer Services concluded more than 1,600 investigations. Some highlights include:

- *Reimbursement of $13,000 obtained for an individual who had been intimidated into making a settlement on a loan for which the individual was not directly responsible.*
- *In August 2004, a home renovation contractor was sentenced to three months in jail, a three-month probation period and was ordered to pay more than $5,000 in restitution. Additional charges resulted in the contractor receiving a suspended sentence for operating without the required licence, a fine of $1,000 and a requirement to pay additional restitution of nearly $5,000.*
- *In September 2004, a home renovation contractor was sentenced to three years in prison for taking deposits from homeowners without doing any actual work. This renovator has a lengthy history of fraud.*
- *In November 2004, two home renovation contractors were found guilty of unfair practices under the Fair Trading Act involving contracts with four seniors. The contractors were ordered to pay $4,000 in restitution and $6,000 in fines.*
- *In December 2004, the operator of a company marketing and publishing a community-oriented magazine pleaded guilty to a charge of appropriating monies for non-charitable purposes and was sentenced to six months house arrest and ordered to pay restitution of $7,850.*
- *Since December 2004 when the positions were created, Case Assessment Officers have helped more than 100 consumers with complaints that did not require full investigative services.*
- *In partnership with enforcement organizations in Canada and the U.S., assisted in prosecuting a company that operated a cross-border business directory scheme that defrauded mid-size businesses.*
- *Joined forces with the Calgary Police Service in a three-year investigation into a ring of unlicensed prepaid contractors preying on seniors in Calgary. Fair Trading Act and fraud charges were filed against 14 contractors. Sentences ranged from $1,000 fines to a 12-month jail term. Warrants are still outstanding against some of the contractors who may have left Alberta.*

- Responded to 85,000 consumer-related calls. As the following chart indicates, 32 per cent of calls in 2004-05 were referred to other government agencies or non-government agencies due to the specific call requirement.



Call Centre Customer Comments

- *"...They offered me good advice and were very prompt. They then sent me a copy of the Act, which was helpful. They were polite and courteous. I was very satisfied with the information. It put my mind at ease a lot and they gave me advice for the future . . ."*
- *"...I got the exact information I needed. It was so fast. I did not expect to get the information so fast. I was able to get my answer from the automated system; it answered all my questions..."*
- *"...Lady on the phone was very helpful, understanding and listened to my story. I was told what she might be able to do and gave me a couple of contact numbers..."*
- *"...Good service. The information they gave me was very helpful..."*
- *"...The person who helped me knew the rules and regulations very well. They didn't hesitate; they were great..."*
- *"...The lady was very knowledgeable. Went out of her way to be of assistance; she made suggestions and was very professional. She sent me the forms I requested and they came in a couple of days..."*
- *"...She was polite and very knowledgeable. I would definitely use your services again..."*

> Consumers and businesses are informed and empowered to help themselves

- Distributed posters and promotional letters encouraging use of *Reality Choices Alberta* to 150 agencies in Alberta that provide services to youth aged 18-30. *Reality Choices Alberta* is a new consumer resource based on a federal/provincial/territorial publication to help young Albertans make consumer decisions appropriate for them in today's complex and rapidly changing marketplace. Seventy additional copies of the binder were mailed and there were 3,737 visits to the *Reality Choices* website.
- Issued consumer alerts to caution Albertans on unscrupulous businesses and provided tips for dealing with a variety of marketplace issues such as travel clubs, retail sales and pre-paid contracting for home renovations repair.

- With input from the Alberta Residential Tenancies Advisory Committee (ARTAC), developed a Voluntary Code of Practice for Landlords and a quick reference guide for agency staff providing information to landlords and tenants. There were 54,913 visits in the website and 4,781 copies of the code of practice were mailed.
- Provided tipsheets to Albertans through the ministry website and call centre. The tipsheet page received 292,514 visits in 2004-05. In addition, 28,069 tipsheets were mailed.
- Provided 28 articles on condominium, tenancy, electricity and identity theft to industry groups for publication in their newsletters.
- Provided 1,500 copies of the Identity Theft Kit for Businesses to community groups in partnership with Alberta Solicitor General.

Helping Alberta Consumers Client Comments

- *"...I just wanted to thank you again for your diligence and persistence in pursuing [home improvement contractor]. It is so nice to know that they are held responsible and will not be preying on more vulnerable seniors. Thank-you..."*
- *"...The service fulfils its promise to society, which is to protect consumers from unlawful business practices. Thank you for everything..."*
- *"...I want to extend my appreciation for your advocating on my behalf and educating me so that I have become an informed consumer. This government service is definitely a worthwhile resource and I intend on advising others of your service. With all of the government cutbacks, I am pleased that this department has been maintained to administrate and enforce consumer protection laws in Alberta..."*

Free tipsheets available to Albertans

Government Services publishes tipsheets on a wide variety of consumer topics. Written in plain language, these tipsheets explain the rights and obligations of both consumers and businesses in various commercial transactions.

- *Auctions – Buying and Selling*
- *Business Opportunity and Franchise Fraud*
- *Buying a Franchise in Alberta*
- *Buying and Owning a Condominium*
- *Buying Time Shares*
- *Cooperatives Act: An Overview*
- *Credit and Personal Reporting*
- *Dealing with Bill Collection Agencies*
- *Dealing with Door-to-Door Sales*
- *Electricity Marketing: What Consumers Should Know*
- *Fair Trading Act: What's New*
- *Home Renovations and Repair*
- *Identity Theft*
- *Investigating your Consumer Complaints*
- *Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act: Renting a Mobile Home Site*
- *Mortgage Fraud*
- *Natural Gas Marketing: What Consumers Should Know*
- *Negotiating a Consumer Complaint*
- *Provincial Business Licences and Registrations*
- *Residential Tenancies Act – Quick Reference Guide*
- *Residential Tenancies Act – Voluntary Code of Practice*
- *Shopping on the Internet*
- *The Charitable Fund-raising Act: Information for Charities and Donors*
- *The Residential Tenancies Act: Information for Landlords and Tenants*
- *Travel Clubs*
- *Unfair Practices: Fair Trading Act*
- *What Creditors Can Do If You Don't Pay Your Debts*

To receive any of these tipsheets, please visit the Alberta Government Services website:
www.gov.ab.ca/gs/information/publications/tipsheets/index.cfm

Or contact the call centre toll-free at:
1-877-427-4088
to have one mailed or faxed to you.

Informing Alberta Consumers and Businesses - Client Comments

Regarding the new Residential Tenancies Act – Voluntary Code of Practice:

- *"...Really great job..."*
- *"...Good information..."*
- *"...Useful court cases..."*

Regarding tipsheets:

- *"...There was quite a bit of comprehensive information. It provided me the ability to show my tenants that I wasn't dreaming up the rules and regulations..."*
- *"...It helped me to clarify my concerns and will be used to help in my final decision-making..."*
- *"...It used non-technical language which I found helpful. It was short and simple. It was readily accessible and easy to read..."*

Performance Measures – Goal 2

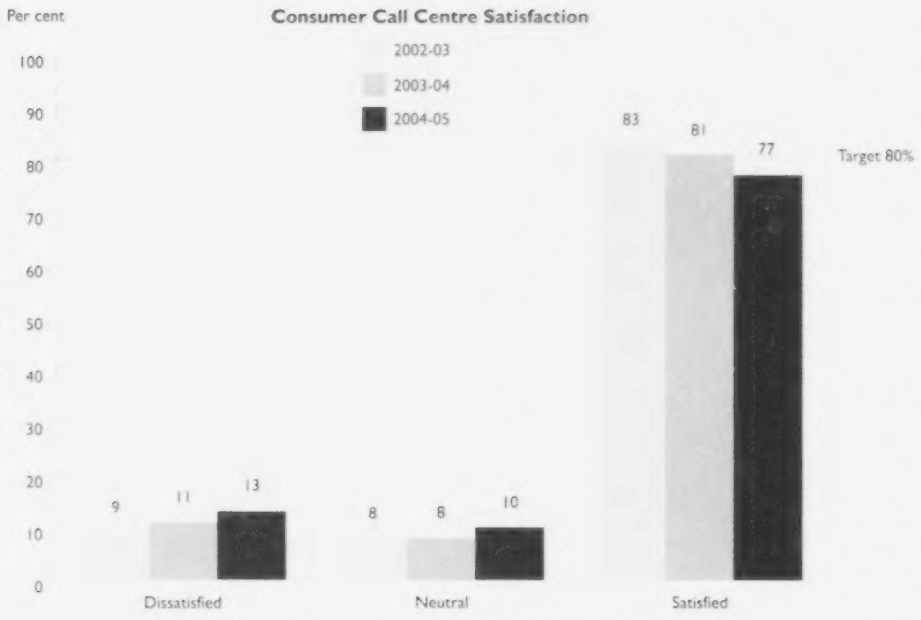
Performance Measure: Percentage of ministry call centre clients (consumers-related) who are "satisfied overall" with the quality of service.

> Description

The Government Services call centre responds to inquiries on both registries and consumer-related issues. Client satisfaction with calls related to consumer inquiries and consumer protection concerns ranging from residential tenancies to fair-trading issues is included in this measure. However, this measure does not include calls directed to the Utilities Consumer Advocate.

> Results

77 per cent (key performance measure) of those people surveyed expressed satisfaction with the consumer-related services provided. This almost met the target of 80 per cent.



Source : 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 Synovate Research

> Analysis

While declining somewhat over the previous year, client satisfaction with the services provided by the call centre almost met the 80 per cent target. The increasing complexity of consumer issues handled by call centre staff and broader range of knowledge required to address these issues have contributed to some erosion of the satisfaction results (e.g., assisting consumers victimized by fraud or identity theft, dealing with landlords and tenants on tenancies issues). The ministry will continue improvement initiatives even though it has almost met its target while fielding more than 84,000 calls this year. The ministry is reviewing the process by which calls are channelled, as well as exploring opportunities to enhance training opportunities.

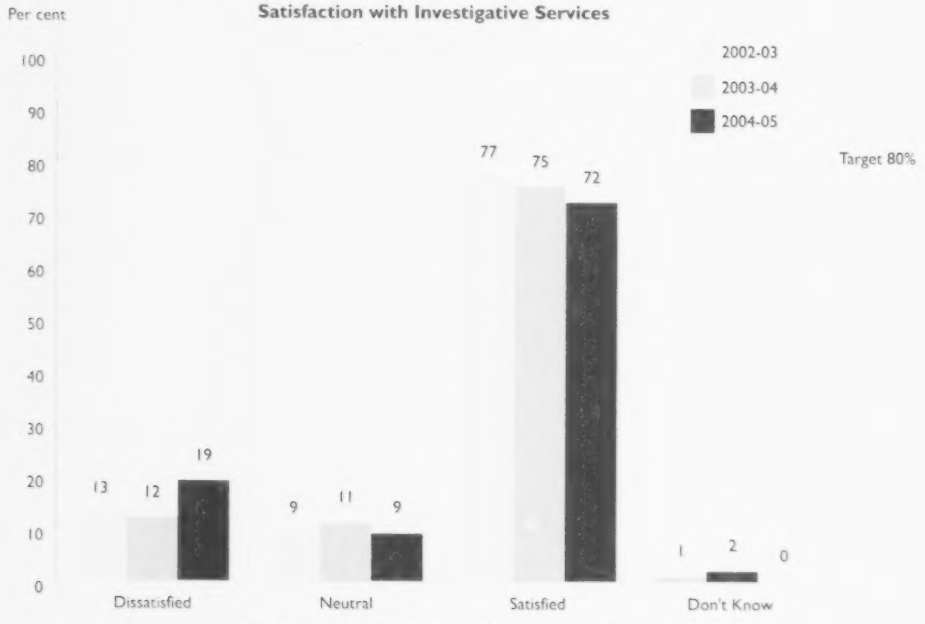
Performance Measure: Percentage of clients who are "satisfied overall" with the quality of investigative services.

> Description

The ministry works to ensure a fair and effective marketplace for consumers and businesses by delivering quality investigative services. Albertans' satisfaction with the services provided by the Consumer Services investigation teams is assessed by this measure.

> Results

72 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were satisfied overall with the quality of investigative services provided to them.



Source : 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate Research

> Analysis

Client satisfaction may be swayed by the investigation's outcome. At 72 per cent, overall client satisfaction remains relatively high, given that some investigation outcomes will inevitably not be in the client's favour. As further illustration, those respondents who felt the outcome of the investigation was fair reported a 94 per cent satisfaction rating.

It should be noted that the outcome of some investigations rests with the courts. Thus, a decision made by an outside body can affect a client's perception of satisfaction with investigative services. Nevertheless, even though only 55 per cent had a decision in their favour, an overwhelming 84 per cent of all respondents reported that they are likely to recommend the services of the ministry to a friend.

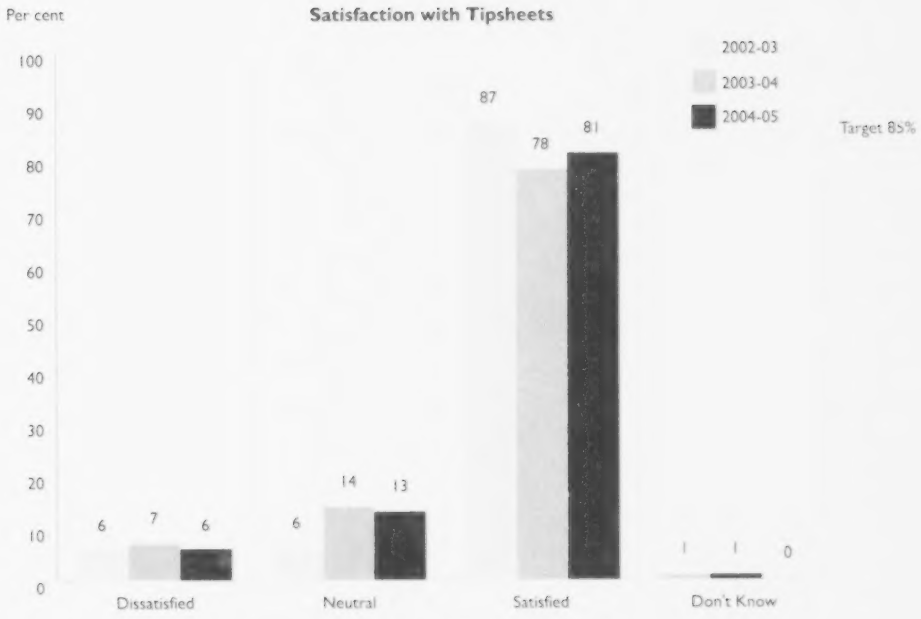
Performance Measure: Percentage of clients who are "satisfied" with the overall quality of tipsheet information.

> Description

Consumer Services develops and distributes tipsheets to educate and promote well-informed consumers and businesses. The ministry currently has an inventory of more than two dozen different tipsheets that help ensure Albertans have access to relevant and effective consumer protection information. Albertans are also regularly canvassed to ensure that tipsheet content continues to be useful and comprehensive.

> Results

81 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents indicated satisfaction with tipsheets, which almost meets the target of 85 per cent.



Source: 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 Synovate Research

> Analysis

Client satisfaction with Consumer Services tipsheets has improved over the prior year and has almost met the target of 85 per cent. In addition, the majority of recipients (62 per cent) who were satisfied with the tipsheet they received reported that it answered all their questions and helped them resolve their problems.

Further work will be undertaken in the coming year to improve tipsheet content and ensure it continues to meet the needs of Albertans. ■

Goal 3: Effective advocacy of Albertans' interests in the restructured utilities market.

Core Business – Support a fair and effective marketplace in Alberta.

Overview

The Utilities Consumer Advocate's (UCA) office represents the residential, farm and small business consumer in resolving concerns related to the restructured electricity and natural gas markets. The office mediates concerns related to a wide variety of utility issues. Additionally, it provides representation on behalf of consumers in policy discussions and new government initiatives. In providing a voice on behalf of small consumers, the office relies on feedback received through its Advisory Council, which provides grassroots consumer input on issues related to natural gas and electricity.

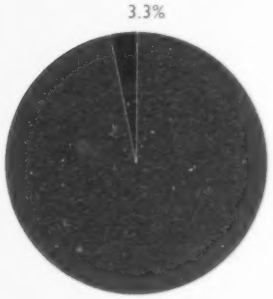
The UCA represents homeowners and tenants, farmers and owners of small businesses in their dealings with utilities, regulatory agencies and the provincial government.

> Key areas of responsibility include:

- *Consumer Information*. Promotes understanding of the restructured utility markets by informing consumers of their rights and obligations in Alberta's restructured utility industry. The UCA works to ensure consumers receive plain language information so they can make the right choices in meeting their energy needs.
- *Consumer Concerns*. Researches and responds to consumer concerns. When a gap in service or a failure to consider the consumer's perspective is brought to the Advocate's attention, it is investigated with the appropriate utility companies for action. Every effort is made to encourage utility companies to address consumer complaints in a timely, accurate and fair manner.
- *Regulatory Hearings*. Works directly with other consumer organizations to represent consumers with a strong, credible voice before the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) and the courts.

The operation of the UCA office is funded by the Balancing Pool and the natural gas distributors. Eighty per cent (80 per cent) of total funding is provided through the Balancing Pool (section 148 of the *Electric Utilities*

Utilities Consumer Advocate (millions of dollars)



3.3% ($2.5)

Although budgeted at $4.4 million, 2004-05 actual expenditures were only $2.5 million. Surplus funds of $1.9 million will be deducted from industry's 2005-06 contributions.

Act). A further 20 per cent comes from the natural gas distribution utilities (section 28.1 of the *Gas Utilities Act*). This funding formula reflects the anticipated time and effort being expended on these two energy sources.

Activities/Achievements

- Assisted more than 2,000 Albertans with concerns about retail electricity and natural gas service and resolved issues relating to billing, contracts and customer service. The office was instrumental in getting the utilities to issue refunds for over-billed accounts and address customer service issues.

Consumer Testimonial:

"...Thank you so much for your prompt response to our request for an investigation into our gas bill. Because of your efforts, we are receiving a credit ... can you believe it!!! Anyways, we are so thankful that we contacted you or I guess we probably would have just ended up paying it...So, thank you again and pass this letter on to your supervisors as we would like them to know how helpful you have been..."

- Co-operated with the Department of Energy to consult with consumer groups and licensed retailers to develop plain language contracts to simplify/standardize retail energy contracts. This initiative will help to minimize concerns regarding the sometimes confusing language of the existing contracts.
- Participated in more than 20 proceedings, two court cases, four Review & Variance applications and four negotiated settlements in representing the interests of small consumers at (EUB) hearings. This effort, taken in collaboration with other interveners, achieved in excess of $98 million in reductions to requested rates.
- Joined with other consumer groups in opposing the removal of the $500 million ATCO Gas Carbon storage facility without compensation to consumers. This issue is currently before the EUB and the Alberta Court of Appeal. A related case is before the Supreme Court of Canada.

- Signed a formal agreement with the Consumers Coalition of Alberta, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, the Public Institutional Consumers of Alberta and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business - Alberta Chapter to represent consumers in regulatory hearings.
- Developed standards for utility accounting and reporting that will make the regulatory process more transparent and less costly.
- Held regular meetings of the UCA Advisory Council. The UCA team obtained valuable consumer input on consumer concerns related to natural gas and electricity. The Advisory Council is composed of 10 community-minded Albertans who represent a cross-section of the province's population.
- Played a key role in shaping retail policy for electricity to ensure the interests of small consumers are protected. The Advisory Council published two reports in early 2005, articulating concerns on behalf of consumers.
- Prompted utility companies to resolve consumer concerns relating to billing, contracts and customer service.
- Participated on committees and task forces to review policies related to the operation of the wholesale and retail energy markets, alignment of billing periods under the *Regulated Default Supply Regulation* and the Tariff Billing Code to standardize data formats among utility companies.
- Influenced policy changes to benefit consumers (e.g., resolving language around final bills, incorrect consumption estimates, removal of off-season delivery charges for seasonal utility customers, contact information regarding disconnection of service notices).
- Implemented a joint initiative with Credit Counselling Services of Alberta to support Albertans who are experiencing financial hardship in paying their utility bills.
- Issued more than 4,000 copies of the UCA's Electricity and Natural Gas Contracts booklet to inform consumers of their rights and obligations when entering into energy contracts.
- Maintained a website to provide useful tips to consumers on energy use and efficiency.

Consumer Testimonial:

"...I just wanted to thank you for all your efforts in helping to resolve the issues I was having with my electrical provider. I doubt that it would be solved now without your intervention. After sorting out the billing, I was pleasantly surprised that the company offered in writing that I could cancel the contract without penalty..."

Performance Measures – Goal 3

Performance Measure: Percentage of customers "satisfied overall" with services.

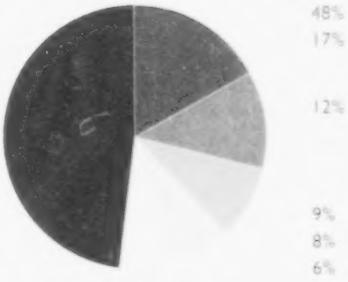
> Description

This measure focuses on client satisfaction with those who have contacted the consumer information centre regarding their concerns about utility issues.

> Results

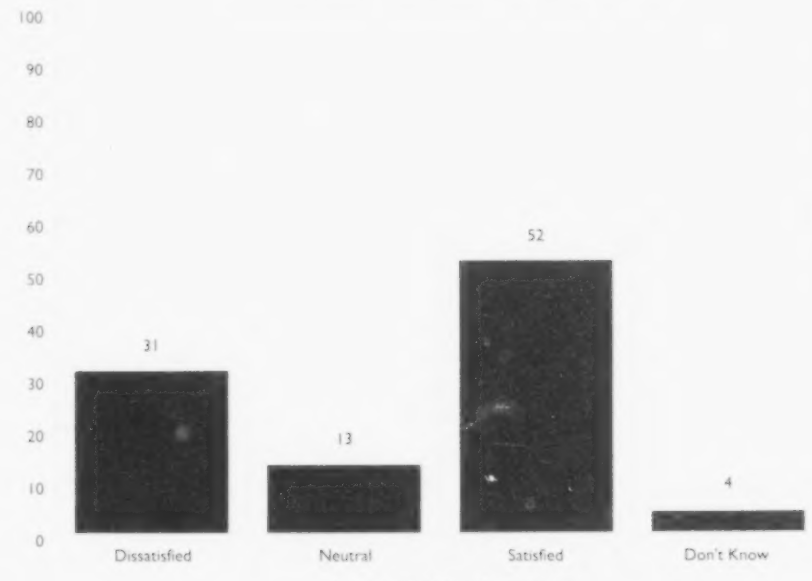
52 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were satisfied with the quality of service received through the consumer information centre. The 2004–05 target was 60 per cent.

Most Commonly Identified Concerns



48% Billing
17% Contracts
12% Market Restructuring
9% Customer Service
8% Other
6% Meter Disputes

Satisfaction with Consumer Information Centre



Source : 2004–05 Leger Marketing

> Analysis

Client satisfaction with the service provided by the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate consumer information centre did not meet the 60 per cent target. Of those respondents who were dissatisfied, more than 40 per cent were not happy with the outcome of the centre's investigation and provided a dissatisfied rating.

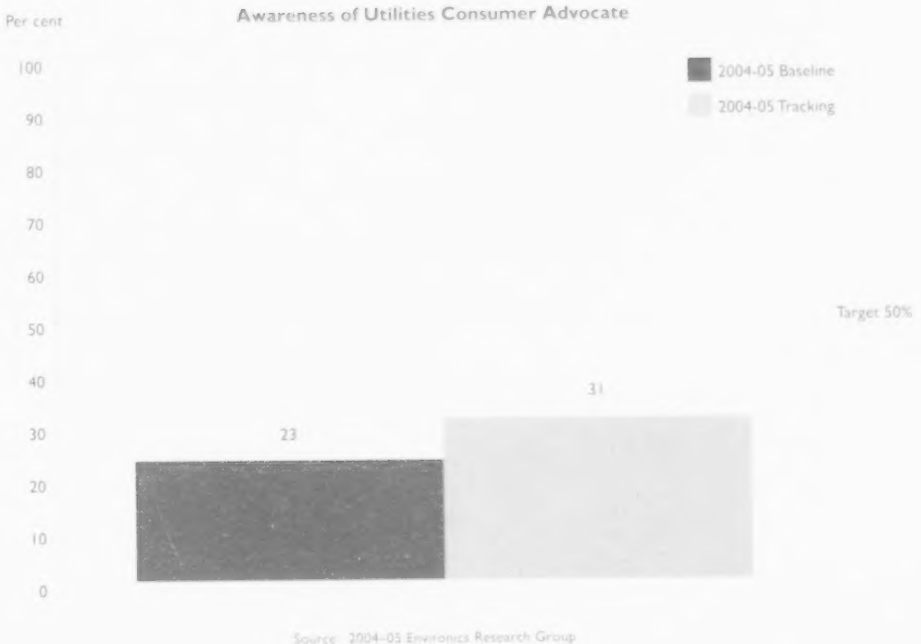
Performance Measure: Percentage of Albertans aware of the role/services provided by the Utilities Consumer Advocate

> Description

A measure of Albertans' awareness of the Utilities Consumer Advocate.

> Results

31 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were aware of the role/services provided by the Utilities Consumer Advocate. The 2004-05 target was 50 per cent.



Source: 2004-05 Environics Research Group

> Analysis

Awareness of the role/services provided by the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA) did not meet the 50 per cent target. However, awareness did significantly increase between the initial baseline results of 23 per cent in July 2004 to 31 per cent in February 2005. The UCA is still a relatively new entity established in October 2003. The ministry recognizes that increased awareness can help the UCA be more effective. In the coming year, the ministry will hire a marketing co-ordinator to address awareness, establish an industry stakeholder group to develop a consumer education program and survey consumers about their current information needs.

Performance Measure: Percentage of interveners expressing satisfaction with the co-operative protocol utilized by the Utilities Consumer Advocate

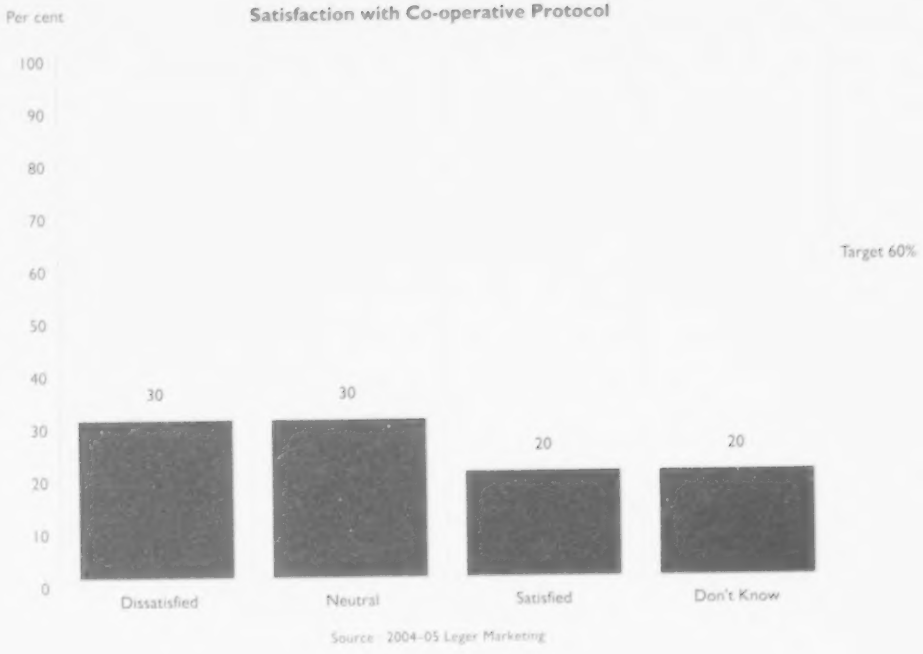
> Description

This measure is an assessment of consumer intervener groups' satisfaction with the UCA's co-operative protocol. An intervener is an organization other than a utility or individual company that directly participates in the utility regulatory process and may represent consumers or producers of utility services and products.

The UCA has joined with other organizations representing Alberta's residential, small commercial and farm customers to co-ordinate intervention efforts before the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB), other tribunals and courts. Through the development of a collaborative protocol, the UCA is helping achieve improved co-ordination of effort, greater efficiencies and better use of limited resources for regulatory proceedings before the EUB. The co-operative protocol is an agreement that prescribes how the work of intervention is to be undertaken and shared.

> Results

20 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were satisfied that the co-operative protocol would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory interventions on behalf of small utility consumers. The 2004–05 target was 60 per cent.



Source: 2004-05 Leger Marketing

> Analysis

Client satisfaction with the co-operative protocol provided by the office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate did not meet the 60 per cent target. However, 30 per cent of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 20 per cent of respondents did not provide comment. Interveners are being contacted individually in 2005-06 in order to investigate what steps can be taken to increase their satisfaction with the operation of the protocol. ■

Goal 4: A service environment that enables Albertans to access government information and services in a manner of their choice.

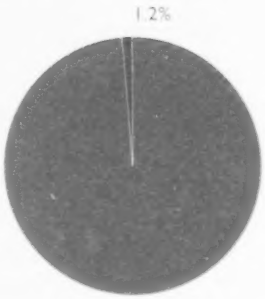
Core Business – Lead service improvement initiatives on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Overview

Service Alberta is a government-wide service improvement initiative focused on providing Albertans with quality information and services in a manner that best suits their schedule and lifestyle. Whether the preference is to make a phone call, drop into an office, use fax or mail or the Internet, the goal of Service Alberta is to make that connection as convenient as possible. Full implementation of Service Alberta will take several years, but will result in seamless, secure and consistent service across all delivery channels.

The designation of this initiative as an administrative initiative underlines the importance the Alberta Government places on customer convenience and flexible access to the broadest range of government services and information. During 2004-05, the greatest commitment by another ministry was through the Ministry of Restructuring and Government Efficiency, which demonstrated its support for this vital service initiative through funding and staff secondment. Other ministry champions include Alberta Municipal Affairs, the Public Affairs Bureau, the Personnel Administration Office and Alberta Health and Wellness.

Service Alberta (millions of dollars)



1.2% ($0.9)

The ministry has allocated 1.2 per cent (or $0.9 million) of its total 2004-05 operating expense to this goal. Additional contributions were also received from other ministry partners.

Service Alberta...the place to find government information and services.

You can visit the Service Alberta website at www.gov.ab.ca. You will find government information and services organized in a way that makes sense to you. You don't have to know which government ministry to look up. Just find the topic that applies to you and let the website do the rest! For example, there is information on:

- *Finding a job*
- *Moving to or around Alberta*
- *What to do if you lose your wallet*
- *Ordering government publications*

There's a lot more. Visit the site to see how Service Alberta can help you find the information you need.

How does the Service Alberta contact centre help Albertans?

Service Alberta contact centre agents use the Service Alberta website to answer Albertans' questions more often on the first call. One-stop shopping is the goal for easy, convenient and secure access to government information and services for Albertans. Calling the Service Alberta contact centre will put you in touch with a person who will either give you the information you need or link you to someone who can.

Activities/Achievements

> Albertans can easily find and access the services they need.

To contact the Service Alberta contact centre anywhere in Alberta call toll-free: **310-0000** between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. during the week.

- Commissioned an expert assessment of Service Alberta communication needs and marketing options. The results of this study indicated it would be more effective to improve access to government programs and information rather than continuing with expensive advertising campaigns. This approach was adopted.
- Maintained Service Alberta profile in the Government of Alberta website and telephone directory, as well as in the blue pages of telephone directories.
- Received an average of 60,000 visits to the website per month during 2004, compared to 38,000 in 2003. The significant increase is mainly due to the increased Service Alberta profile on the Government of Alberta homepage.
- Received more than 77,000 calls at the Service Alberta contact centre each month while maintaining an average speed to answer of 13 seconds.
- Gathered information on issues and satisfaction with service access for those with special access needs through the annual survey of Albertans and focus group sessions. Developed a strategic plan to address accessibility issues raised by Albertans.

- Made the *Guide to Services for Lower-Income Albertans* available on the Service Alberta website. The guide brings together information about low-income programs from many government departments. It also improves accessibility for people with disabilities or slower Internet connections through:
    - A text-only version for people who use screen-reading software;
    - A Braille version; and
    - Audio files.

  Nearly 9,000 visitors accessed the guide between October and December 2004. It earned the Public Affairs Bureau's Bright Idea Award.

> Albertans' service needs and expectations are addressed in a positive manner based on choice, respect and timeliness.

- Gained endorsement by Deputy Ministers' Committee for cross-government service standards and provided training and implementation support to ministries.
- Worked in collaboration with the Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy to promote service excellence across the public service. This included providing periodic e-mails to staff outlining how the Service Alberta website can be a useful resource to them.

What Albertans are saying about services provided by government:

- *87% - service delivery staff were courteous (up two per cent from 2004)*
- *83% – service staff were knowledgeable (up three per cent from 2004)*
- *82% – staff did everything necessary to assist with your service need (new question)*
- *75% – length of time it took to speak to the person who served you was reasonable (up seven per cent from 2004)*
- *69% – length of time it took to serve you or resolve your problem was reasonable (new question)*

Source: 2005 Survey of Albertans

> Albertans receive seamless and consistent service across all delivery channels.

- Gained Innovation Program funding to pilot the development of a common change of address application in collaboration with three ministries. Completed the pilot as well as a privacy impact assessment to ensure all privacy-related issues are addressed during full development of the application.
- Undertook a cross-ministry consultation process to determine the future direction for Service Alberta.
- Continued to promote use of the speech automated survey system (SASS) for contact centres. To date, eight areas have used the system to survey more than 2,000 clients and average satisfaction is reported at 87 per cent.
- Assisted one ministry in completing a review of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) scripting to identify ways to make it more user-friendly. Used the results to develop a template for similar IVR reviews.
- Developed the cross-government content management system on the Service Alberta website and provided leadership in planning the cross-government implementation.
- Co-ordinated a major enhancement project for the Service Alberta website based on feedback from Albertans. Enhancements include:
    - Increased profile of content for businesses. Two views of the site will be available to Albertans: Residents and Businesses.
    - Enhanced integration of government information resources. Albertans will be able to access "at one glance" all services, forms, publications, online services, contact and other relevant information associated with each topic or audience they select.
    - Streamlined the process for ministries to contribute and maintain their information on the Service Alberta website.
- Developed a benefits eligibility calculator for lower income Albertans in collaboration with three other ministries.

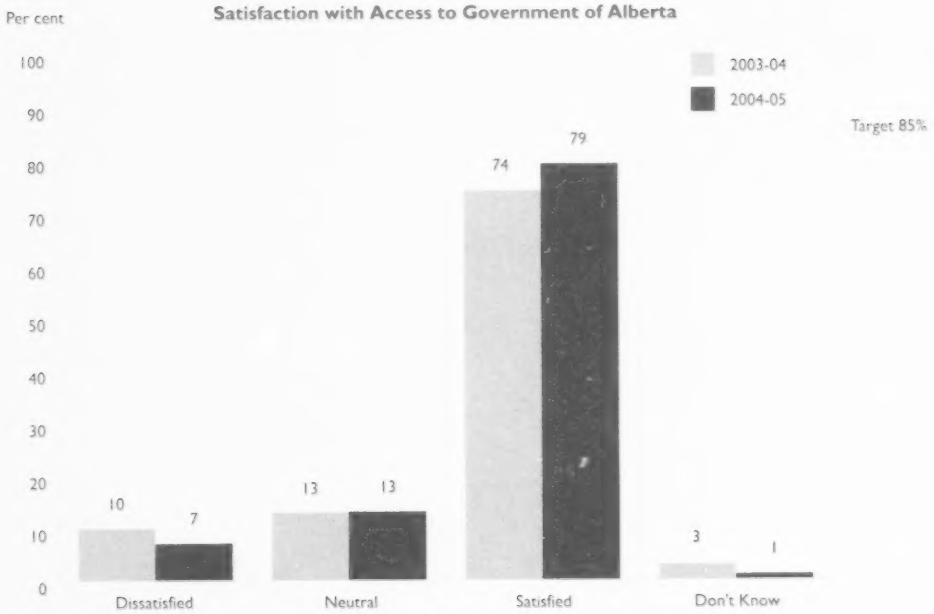
Performance Measure: Percentage of Albertans who are "satisfied" with their access to Government of Alberta information and services.

> Description

Providing Albertans with accessible, integrated and quality services from the Government of Alberta continues to be a key objective of the Service Alberta initiative. This measure surveys Albertans' overall satisfaction with their ability to access government services whether online, by telephone, by mail, by fax or in person.

> Results

79 per cent (key performance measure) indicated satisfaction with access to Government of Alberta information and services. The 2004–05 target was 85 per cent.



Source : 2003–04 and 2004–05 Research Innovations

> Analysis

Satisfaction among those who actually accessed or tried to access Government of Alberta information and services is high, with 79 per cent of respondents indicating they are satisfied with their ability to access information and services. In continuing to work towards the 85 per cent target, the ministry demonstrates its strong commitment to ensuring Albertans are satisfied with their ability to access government services.

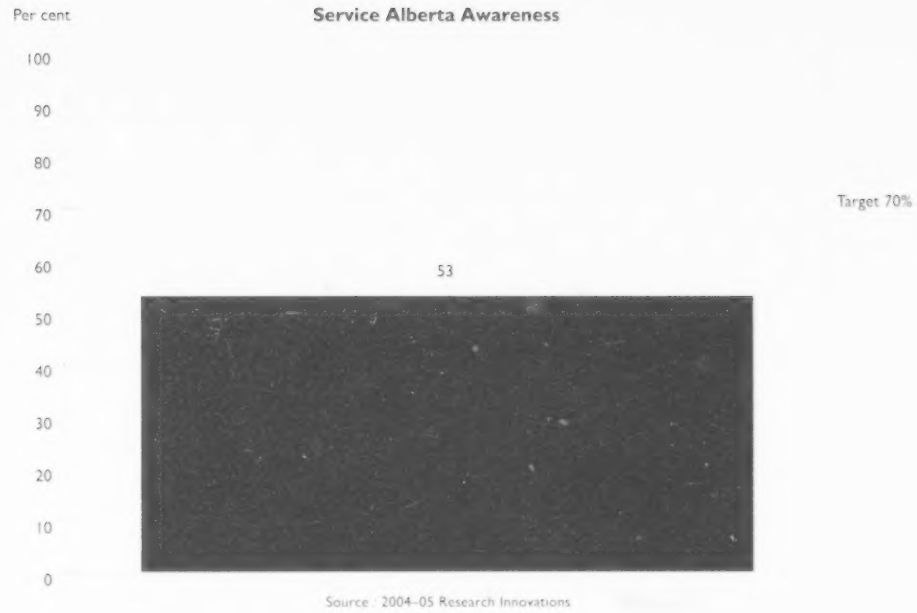
Performance Measure: Percentage of Albertans who are aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and/or website.

> Description

Service Alberta's mandate is to provide Albertans with accessible, integrated and quality services from the Government of Alberta. However, if citizens are not aware of these services, they are not likely to access them. This measure surveys Albertans' overall awareness that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free telephone number and/or website.

> Results

53 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents are aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and/or website. The results for this new measure did not meet the target of 70 per cent.



Source : 2004-05 Research Innovations

> Analysis

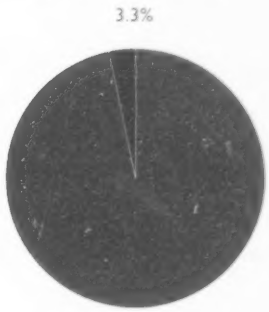
With an awareness rating of 53 per cent, the majority of Albertans are aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and/or website. While the 70 per cent target for awareness was not met, the ministry remains committed to ensuring Albertans know where to access government services and information. Service Alberta set aside $150,000 of ministry tangible contributions for awareness activities in 2004-05 and engaged a marketing firm to ensure the most effective use of these funds for influencing future awareness. Based on the high costs involved, a full-scale marketing campaign was not undertaken and other strategies are being developed for 2005-06. ■

Goal 5: Effective management of and access to information and protection of privacy.

Core Business – Lead service improvement initiatives on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

In addition to providing excellent service to the public, Alberta Government Services also provides support services to other provincial ministries and government bodies.

Government Support
(millions of dollars)



3.3% ($2.5)

Providing effective access to information, privacy protection and other service improvements for government consumed 3.3 per cent ($2.5 million) of the ministry's 2004–05 operating expenses.

Overview

Alberta Government Services administers the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP) and the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA). The ministry actively supports provincial ministries and local public bodies in fostering consistent interpretation and effective application of FOIP. In addition, the ministry works with the private sector to promote an understanding of PIPA and provides practical resources to assist organizations in applying the act.

The ministry is also responsible for co-ordinating the Government of Alberta information and records management programs. To support ministries in managing their information assets, an Information Management Framework is being implemented. The ministry also chairs the Alberta Records Management Committee, which is responsible for approving record disposition schedules.

Through the Regulatory Review Secretariat, the ministry supports an enhanced regulatory environment by promoting the regular and timely review of provincial regulations.

Activities/Achievements

> Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation is effective and support is provided to those administering the act.

- Completed an extensive update to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Guidelines and Practices publication*. This update incorporates all the recent amendments to the FOIP *Act and Regulation*, including the FOIP *Amendment Act*, 2003, and references the most significant decisions of the Commissioner.

- Collaborated with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review the potential impact of the USA PATRIOT Act and similar laws on Albertans' personal information.
- Developed a new bulletin to clarify how the FOIP Act relates to the personal information of deceased individuals.
- Provided FOIP training to more than 530 participants from government and local bodies.
- Responded to more than 1,860 calls to the FOIP Help Desk from government and local public body staff and the public. The FOIP website (www.gov.ab.ca/foip) received more than 1,384,000 visits in 2004-05.
- Developed an online searchable directory of public bodies to assist individuals to identify and locate records. The directory is searchable by FOIP contact, public body name, location and type of public body.
- Launched a web-based FOIP request tracking system to enable users (public bodies) to more easily track access requests.

> Private sector privacy legislation will be in effect for Alberta businesses and support provided to those administering the act.

- Developed the *Personal Information Protection Amendment Act, 2005* to:
    - Exclude constituency associations;
    - Clarify the exclusion for health information;
    - Grant the Commissioner powers to consult with other privacy commissioners;
    - Expand exercise of rights of deceased individuals; and
    - Change the commencement date for the review of the act.
- Developed nearly a dozen publications to assist organizations in understanding and applying the act.
- Redesigned the PIPA website to make it easier for organizations to find the information they want. The website received more than 286,325 visits and the new PIPA information line responded to more than 1,700 inquiries in 2004-05.

Interested in learning more about FOIP?

In accordance with legislation, Government Services publishes a comprehensive annual report on FOIP activities. Readers interested in learning more about the administration and application of FOIP legislation in Alberta or who wish to obtain specific statistics are encouraged to review these annual reports. They are available at **www.gov.ab.ca/foip.**

Interested in learning more about PIPA?

This legislation helps protect the personal information of the public and employees of private-sector organizations operating in Alberta. It governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in a manner that recognizes and balances:

- The right of an individual to have his or her personal information protected; and
- The need of the organization to collect, use or disclose personal information for purposes that are reasonable.

Additional information and links regarding Alberta's private sector legislation is available at: **http://www.pipa.gov.ab.ca/**

Alberta's legislation provides:

- *A common set of rules for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information;*
- *A legislative framework that supports international trade;*
- *A right of access to one's own personal information;*
- *A response to the majority of Albertans who see a need for privacy protection legislation; and*
- *Standards on accountability and the security of personal information.*

> Information management and regulatory frameworks guide ministries in delivering their programs.

- Continued leading the implementation of the Information Management Framework across government in partnership with the Office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer (Alberta Restructuring and Government Efficiency). Key accomplishments were:
    - Issued a Request for Proposals to select electronic information management software, which will assist ministries in effectively managing electronic documents, web content, paper files and other information in an integrated manner.
    - Collaborated with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation and the Provincial Archives to conduct a pilot study on a digital preservation strategy for the government's electronic information.
    - Developed several guides for ministries on managing electronic information, including instant messaging and using personal digital assistants.
- Launched a comprehensive new website (www.im.gov.ab.ca) to provide government staff with a single point of access to information management tools and resources. The website received more than 600,000 visits in 2004-05.
- Organized Alberta's first Managing Information Assets in the Public Sector conference in partnership with the Edmonton Chapter of the Association of Records Management Professionals. The conference attracted more than 280 delegates.

- Conducted information and records management training for government staff in partnership with Alberta Restructuring and Government Efficiency. Training was provided to almost 200 participants in 2004-05.
- Co-ordinated the approval of 36 records retention and disposition schedules through the Alberta Records Management Committee.
- Continued to support the work of the Regulatory Review Secretariat to ensure that Alberta has a streamlined, effective and efficient regulatory environment. By the end of 2004-05, only 26 outstanding pre-1996 regulations remain from the 1,201 originally identified.

Performance Measures – Goal 5

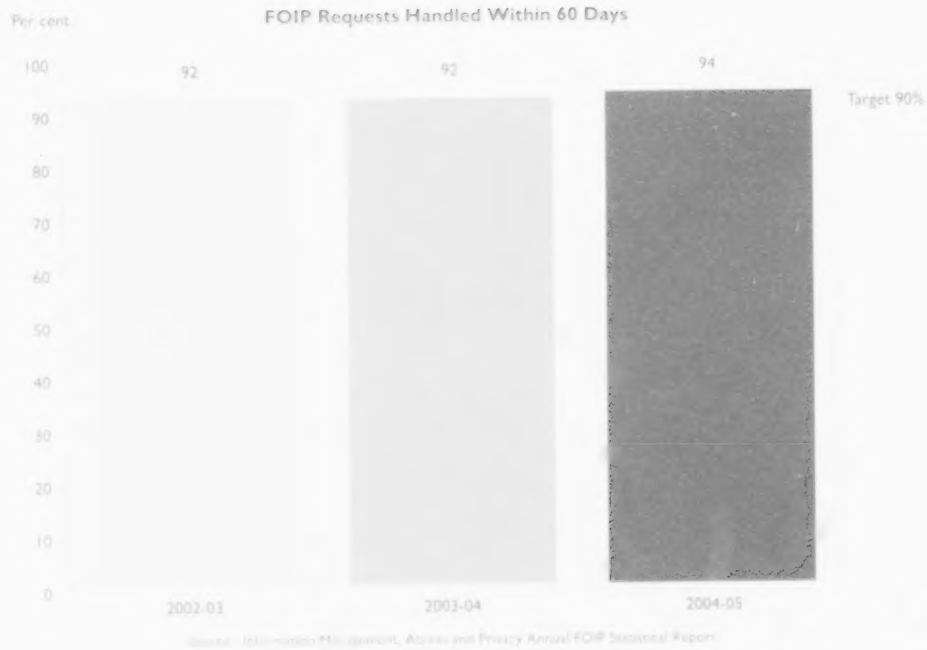
Performance Measure: Percentage of FOIP requests completed by government public bodies within 60 days or less.

> Description

The ministry provides tools, advice and support to assist government public bodies in successfully handling their *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP) requests. In order to track the compliance of government public bodies with the access provisions of FOIP, the percentage of FOIP requests completed on a timely basis (within legislative guidelines) is assessed. The target is 90 per cent of requests completed within 60 days.

> Results

94 per cent (key performance measure) of FOIP requests were completed within 60 days.



Source: Information Management, Access and Privacy Annual FOIP Statistical Report

> Analysis

With 94 per cent of requests being handled within 60 days, the target of 90 per cent was exceeded. In addition to demonstrating that the government is complying with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, this result confirms that Albertans have effective access to information. This represents a significant achievement given that the complexity and number of requests received by government continue to increase annually.

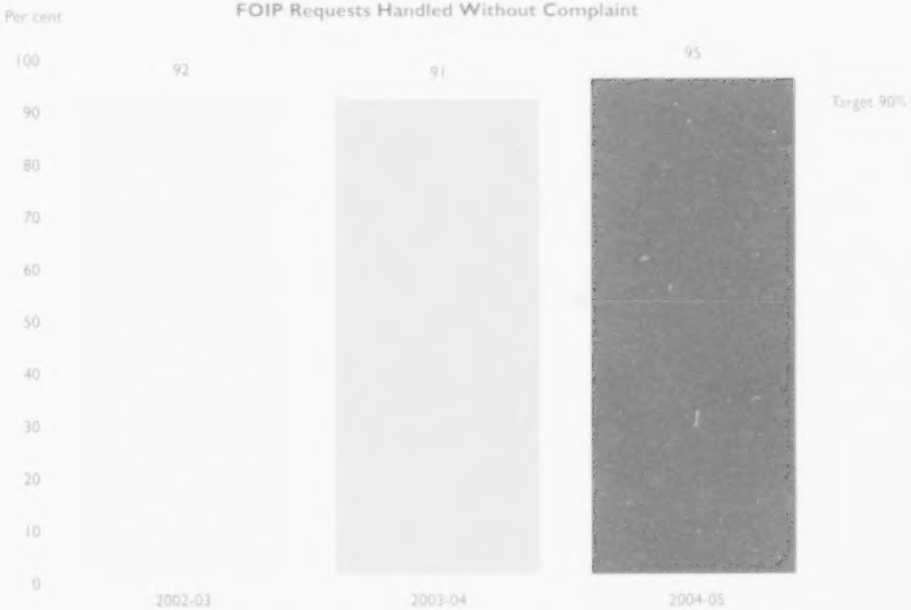
Performance Measure: Percentage of FOIP requests handled without complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner

> Description

Training and advice provided by the ministry continues to support government public bodies in successfully handling the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP) requests they receive. This measure assesses the number of requests handled without complaint, in comparison to the target of 90 per cent.

> Results

95 per cent (key performance measure) of FOIP requests received were handled without complaint.



Source: Information Management, Access and Privacy Annual FOIP Statistical Report

> Analysis

Not only are the results higher than in the previous year, they indicate that client satisfaction with the request process and outcomes are extremely high. The ministry's efforts to support FOIP staff throughout government public bodies have been successful as evidenced by the low number of complaints (five per cent of 3,168 FOIP requests). These results demonstrate the level of openness and transparency that Albertans can expect from their government. ■

Integrated Results Analysis

This section of the annual report focuses on comparing planned to actual results in terms of both financial and business performance. The comparison is structured around the ministry's two core businesses as outlined in the 2004-07 business plan.

The following schedule outlines the actual expenditures incurred compared to the resources budgeted to achieve the objectives of each core business.

Operating Expense by Core Business (millions of dollars)	2003–04	2004–05			
	Restated Actuals	Estimates (per 2004–07 Business Plan)	Adjustments	Authorized Budget	Actual
Core Business 1 – Fair and Effective Marketplace	71.1	77.1	(1.8)	75.3	73.1
• Secure, accessible, accurate and competitively priced licensing and registry services are provided to Albertans. • A comprehensive legislative and accountability framework is maintained, which is key to supporting delivery of ministry services. • Marketplace awareness initiatives are targeted to both buyers and sellers, educating Albertans on their rights and obligations and empowering them to help themselves. • The Utilities Consumer Advocate represents the interests of residential, rural and small commercial customers in Alberta's restructured utility markets.					
Core Business 2 – Service Improvement Initiatives	3.6	3.6	-	3.6	3.4
• Albertans are able to access government information and services in a manner of their choice. • Accessible, integrated and quality provision of government services is promoted by Service Alberta. • Other ministries are assisted in delivering their programs through the provision of a corporate framework for information management and access, protection of privacy, regulatory evaluation and policy review. • Access and privacy legislation is effective and support is provided to Government of Alberta entities, local public bodies and private sector organizations that administer the legislation.					
Total Operating Expense	$74.7	$80.7	($1.8)	$78.9	$76.5

Adjustments include Supplementary Estimates for additional in-year funding for arising priorities as well as dedicated revenues shortfalls.

Highlights of changes in the ministry's spending are as follows:

- Expenditures for Core Business 1 – Fair and Effective Marketplace increased by $2.0 million over the prior year mainly because of hiring 16 new Land Titles Examiners to address sustained increases in Land Titles transaction volumes, as well as increased funding for the Registries Renewal Initiative.
- Increases in operating expense were offset to some degree by a transfer to capital spending for Registries Renewal Initiative investment (approved by Treasury Board) and by an operating surplus under the

Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA). As the UCA operates under a cost-recovery (dedicated revenue) model, surplus funds were not available for use in other ministry programs/services.

- Expenditures for Core Business 2 – Service Improvement Initiatives decreased by $0.2 million over the prior year reflecting the removal of one-time 2003-04 funding provided for the start-up/implementation costs associated with the ministry's co-leadership of the Information Management Framework for government.

The ministry measures its success in realizing its objectives through a series of formal performance measures that are focused predominantly upon:

- Client satisfaction
- Affordable/competitive fees

During 2004-05, a number of factors influenced the ministry's ability to achieve its performance targets.

> Core Business 1 – Fair and Effective Marketplace

Total Operating Expense – $73.1 million.

The ministry continued its efforts to provide effective and efficient service delivery, maintain high standards of service and address the sustained growth in client demand coupled with increasing transaction volumes. Client satisfaction targets for services provided through the provincial network of registry agents slightly exceeded the 85 per cent target. To address client satisfaction with Land Title services, a number of strategies initially implemented in 2003-04 were continued in 2004-05. In addition to the new Land Titles staff and resources provided through the budget process, the ministry relied on further overtime and curtailed staff vacations to ensure turnaround times did not climb as they had in the prior year. As a result, client satisfaction with land title registrations was much improved over the prior year and substantially met its target.

Client satisfaction is also the means for measuring the performance of the ministry's call centre, which handled over 179,000 calls on registry or consumer-related issues. During 2004-05, key categories of interest were energy utility marketing, the *Residential Tenancies Act* and the new driver's licence. Client satisfaction in 2004-05 for registry-related calls slightly exceeded the 80 per cent target, while satisfaction with consumer-related calls, at 77 per cent, almost met the target.

To help support informed consumers and a fair marketplace, the ministry relies on its clear and comprehensive tipsheets as well as investigative services for those consumers who become victims of fraud. Growing complexities in the marketplace and increasing consumer expectations required the ministry to strengthen tipsheet content and develop a strategic approach to investigations that focuses on the most serious offences. While the ministry's tipsheets almost met their 85 per cent satisfaction target, investigative services at 72 per cent did not achieve their 80 per cent target. It is recognized that client satisfaction with investigative services is directly impacted by the findings/outcome of the investigation, so further effort may be required to inform consumers in advance of the likelihood of success and manage client expectations to some degree. Other ways to improve services will also be explored.

In addition to the client satisfaction ratings for licensing and registry services, a fee comparison that demonstrates the affordability of Alberta's fees for these services is another measure of performance. Based on a national comparison of various registry and licensing services, the ministry was successful in achieving its target of having Alberta fees remain competitive with the national average. Alberta's fees range from 82 per cent below the national average for land title transactions to 15 per cent below for a direct selling licence.

Targets in the 2004-07 Business Plan for the relatively new Utilities Consumer Advocate were initially established without the benefit of benchmark data. The lack of benchmark information likely led to somewhat optimistic targets being set, especially given the recent (October 2003) establishment of the UCA office.

While client satisfaction with the services provided by the Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA) consumer information center did not meet the 60 per cent target, this measure also has the potential for distortion if the client is not happy with the outcome of the investigation. In order to improve performance outcomes, the ministry has added additional resources to meet increasing demand and staff are participating in the Service Alberta service excellence recognition program.

Although awareness of the role/services provided by the UCA did not meet the 50 per cent target, awareness did increase significantly between the initial baseline results of 23 per cent in July 2004, to 31 per cent in February 2005. Activities planned to improve awareness include hiring additional marketing resources, establishing an industry stakeholder

group to develop a consumer education program and surveying consumers about their current information needs.

Client satisfaction with the co-operative protocol provided by the UCA also did not meet target. Interveners are being contacted individually in 2005-06 in order to investigate what steps can be taken to increase their satisfaction with the operation of the protocol.

> Core Business 2 – Service Improvement Initiatives

Total Operating Expense – $3.4 million.

Key areas of impact for this core business centered on awareness of Service Alberta and the management of new privacy legislation.

Service Alberta included two performance targets in the 2004-07 Business Plan. The first, Albertans' satisfaction with access to Government of Alberta information and services received relatively high ratings at 79 per cent. However, it did not meet the somewhat optimistic 85 per cent target. The second measure was the level of Albertans' awareness that Government of Alberta information and services are available through Service Alberta. With limited resources to contribute to high-visibility promotional campaigns, the 70 per cent target for awareness was not met. However, more than half the Albertans surveyed know that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and or website.

Recognizing that Service Alberta is a collaborative effort with other ministries and without a large resource base of its own, the funds for a significant awareness campaign will not likely be forthcoming. As a result, the performance measures for the upcoming year will focus more on client satisfaction rather than awareness and progress will continue to be made on an incremental basis, capitalizing on resources provided both by Government Services and other partnering ministries.

Interest in privacy issues continues to grow since the *Personal Information Protection Act* came into force. This has resulted in significant effort to provide appropriate training and information. At the same time, FOIP requests continued to increase as did visits and inquiries to the FOIP website and help desk. The ministry was successful in exceeding its targets both for FOIP requests completed in a timely manner (94 per cent) and requests completed without complaint (95 per cent).

The thriving Alberta economy, increasing client expectations, marketplace complexities and other emerging issues will continue to exert pressure on the ministry's ability to maintain its high performance standards. As well, steps need to be taken to explore and address areas where performance has not met expectations (e.g., satisfaction with consumer investigative services, UCA contact center and co-operative protocol).

The ministry's success in gaining some additional funding will prove valuable in meeting challenges in the upcoming year and should provide opportunities to improve service delivery and further demonstrate the ministry's ongoing commitment to service excellence. ■

Forward Looking Information

During 2004-05, the benefits from investments towards improving client satisfaction were evident, particularly in the area of land titles where lengthy turnaround times had existed. Further opportunities will exist in 2005-06 to apply new resources and technology to improve on service delivery in other areas of the ministry. However, increasing demands for service show no signs of abating given the thriving Alberta economy and advancing consumer sophistication and expectations. Other key factors expected to influence the ministry in the upcoming year include:

- Consumer Awareness: A continuing challenge will be the necessity to make Albertans more aware of the services offered by the ministry. As demonstrated in the ministry's performance measures, less than a third of Albertans are aware of the role and or the services provided by the Utilities Consumer Advocate (31 per cent). And just over half are aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available on the Service Alberta website. Without significant amounts of resources available to invest in advertising campaigns, innovative approaches to building awareness will be required.
- Security and Privacy: As security and privacy breaches become more common, Albertans' expectations of government ensuring their personal information is safeguarded will increase. While Government Services will continue to play a leading role in securing Albertans' personal data, other ministries, partners and stakeholders will also be instrumental in ensuring that personal information is protected. The ministry was able to access additional funding to direct towards this critical issue in the coming year and will continue to work with registry agents, outsourced support service providers and law enforcement agencies to improve the security of systems, documents and handling processes. In addition, the ministry will be required to ensure that provincial privacy legislation is kept current and comprehensive and be vigilant that American legislation, such as the USA PATRIOT Act, does not have a negative impact on Albertans.
- Registries Renewal Initiative: The renewal of the ministry's existing systems for the Personal Property, Land Titles and Motor Vehicles registries continues to be a critical factor in positioning Government Services for the future. Plans for 2005-06 will be based on refreshing the original business case to validate the direction and approach being taken in renewing these critical systems.

- Legislative Renewal: Government Services is responsible for an extensive portfolio of legislation, consisting of 35 acts and 71 regulations that must be kept current and responsive to emerging issues. Significant effort and resources must be dedicated in order to appropriately maintain this legislative framework.

With the availability of additional funding to address growing transaction volumes and security and privacy issues, 2005-06 provides an excellent opportunity for the ministry to improve client satisfaction ratings, as well as the security of personal information. Alberta Government Services is well positioned to respond to future opportunities and challenges while maintaining a strong commitment to providing Albertans with the service excellence they have come to expect from the ministry. ■

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

AUDITOR GENERAL *Alberta*

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly

I have audited the statement of financial position of the Ministry of Government Services as at March 31, 2005 and the statements of operations and cash flow for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the management of the Ministry. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In my opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Ministry as at March 31, 2005 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Fred J. Dunn
FCA
Auditor General

Edmonton, Alberta
May 20, 2005

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Ministry of Government Services
March 31, 2005

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MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
Year ended March 31, 2005

(in thousands)

	2005		2004
	Budget (Schedule 4)	Actual	Actual (Restated - Note 3)
Revenues (Schedules 1 and 2)			
Fees and licences	$ 326,084	$ 347,850	$ 324,474
Other revenue	4,562	2,823	1,800
	330,646	350,673	326,274
Expenses - directly incurred (Note 2b and Schedule 8)			
Voted (Schedules 3 and 5)			
Ministry Support Services	17,310	16,626	16,451
Consumer Services and Land Titles	18,489	18,021	16,522
Service Alberta and Alberta Registries	18,258	19,177	18,828
Government and Program Support Services	3,260	3,164	3,140
Strategic Information Technology Services	18,890	16,778	16,738
Utilities Consumer Advocate	4,370	2,423	1,464
	80,577	76,189	73,143
Statutory (Schedules 3 and 5)			
Personal Property Security Judgments	5	-	-
Land Titles Registrars Assurance Liabilities	20	-	957
Valuation Adjustments			
Provision for doubtful accounts	25	47	198
Provision for vacation pay	61	308	252
	111	355	1,607
	80,688	76,544	74,750
Net operating results	$ 249,958	$ 274,129	$ 251,524

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
March 31, 2005

(in thousands)

	2005	2004 (Restated – Note 3)
ASSETS		
Cash	$ 74,309	$ 69,189
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	7,317	7,493
Tangible capital assets (Note 6)	11,730	7,746
	$ 93,356	$ 84,428
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 7)	$ 36,049	$ 32,765
Unearned revenue (Note 8)	170,571	160,097
	206,620	192,862
NET LIABILITIES		
Net liabilities at beginning of year	(108,434)	(95,845)
Net transfer from Municipal Affairs	(82)	-
Net operating results	274,129	251,524
Net transfer to general revenues	(278,877)	(264,113)
Net liabilities at end of year	(113,264)	(108,434)
	$ 93,356	$ 84,428

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

Year ended March 31, 2005

(in thousands)

	2005	2004
		(Restated - Note 3)
Operating Transactions		
Net operating results	$ 274,129	$ 251,524
Non-cash items included in net operating results		
Amortization (Schedule 3)	2,326	2,254
Valuation adjustments	355	650
	276,810	254,428
(Increase) Decrease in accounts receivable	129	(905)
Increase in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,976	3,264
Increase in unearned revenue	10,474	19,599
Cash provided by operating transactions	290,389	276,386
Capital Transactions		
Acquisitions of tangible capital assets	(6,310)	(3,360)
Transfer of capital assets to other ministries	-	50
Cash applied to capital transactions	(6,310)	(3,310)
Financing Transactions		
Net transfer from Municipal Affairs	(82)	-
Net transfer to general revenues	(278,877)	(264,113)
Cash applied to financing transactions	(278,959)	(264,113)
Increase in cash	5,120	8,963
Cash, beginning of year	69,189	60,226
Cash, end of year	$ 74,309	$ 69,189

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2005

NOTE 1 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The Ministry of Government Services operates under the authority of the *Government Organization Act*, Chapter G-10, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000.

The Ministry supports a fair and effective marketplace in Alberta by providing licensing and registry services and promoting consumer protection. The ministry also leads service improvement initiatives to improve Albertans' access to government and ensure protection of privacy.

NOTE 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND REPORTING PRACTICES

The recommendations of the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants are the primary source for the disclosed basis of accounting. These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the following accounting policies that have been established by government for all departments.

(a) Reporting Entity

All departments of the Government of Alberta operate within the General Revenue Fund (the Fund). The Fund is administered by the Minister of Finance. All cash receipts of departments are deposited into the Fund and all cash disbursements made by departments are paid from the Fund. Net transfer (to) from General Revenues is the difference between all cash receipts and all cash disbursements made.

(b) Basis of Financial Reporting

Revenues

All revenues are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. Cash received for which goods or services have not been provided by year-end is recorded as unearned revenue.

Internal Government Transfers

Internal government transfers are transfers between entities within the government reporting entity where the entity making the transfer does not receive any goods or services directly in return.

Dedicated Revenue

Dedicated revenue initiatives provide a basis for authorizing spending. Dedicated revenues are shown as credits or recoveries in the details of the Government Estimates for a supply vote. If actual dedicated revenues are less than budget and total voted expenses are not reduced by an amount sufficient to cover the deficiency in dedicated revenues, the following year's voted expenses are encumbered. If actual dedicated revenues exceed budget, the Ministry may, with the approval of the Treasury Board, use the excess revenue to fund additional expenses on the program. Schedule 2 discloses information on the Ministry's dedicated revenue initiatives.

Expenses

Directly Incurred

Directly incurred expenses are those costs the Ministry has primary responsibility and accountability for, as reflected in the Government's budget documents.

In addition to program operating expenses such as salaries, supplies, etc., directly incurred expenses also include:

- amortization of tangible capital assets.
- pension costs, which comprise the cost of employer contributions for current service of employees during the year.
- valuation adjustments, which include changes in the valuation allowances used to reflect financial assets at their net recoverable or other appropriate value. Valuation adjustments also represent the change in management's estimate of future payments arising from obligations relating to va. ation pay.

Incurred by Others

Services contributed by other entities in support of the Ministry operations are disclosed in Schedule 8.

Assets

Financial assets of the Ministry are limited to financial claims, such as advances to and receivables from other organizations, employees and other individuals.

Assets acquired by right are not included. Tangible capital assets of the Ministry are recorded at historical cost and amortized on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the assets. The threshold for capitalizing new systems development is $100,000 and the threshold for all other tangible capital assets is $5,000 (2004 - $15,000).

Donated tangible capital assets are recorded at their fair value at the time of contribution.

When physical assets (tangible capital assets and inventories) are gifted or sold for a nominal sum to parties external to the government reporting entity, the fair values of these physical assets less any nominal proceeds are recorded as grants in kind.

Liabilities

Liabilities represent all financial claims payable by the ministry at fiscal year end.

Net Liabilities

Net liabilities represents the difference between the carrying value of assets held by the ministry and its liabilities.

NOTE 3 GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING

As a result of the government restructuring announced on November 25, 2004, Alberta Corporate Service Centre was transferred to the newly established Ministry of Restructuring and Government Efficiency.

The 2004 amounts were restated, as if the Ministry of Government Services existed without Alberta Corporate Service Centre on April 1, 2003 and throughout the two-year period covered by these financial statements.

Net liabilities, as previously reported at March 31, 2003	$ (100,941)
Transfer to the Ministry of Restructuring and Government Efficiency	5,096
Net liabilities, as restated at April 1, 2003	$ (95,845)

The 2004 amounts were also restated to reflect the termination of a shared service agreement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the transfer of related costs.

NOTE 4 ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

(in thousands)

	2005			2004
	Gross Amount	Allowance for Doubtful Accounts	Net Realizable Value	Net Realizable Value
Accounts receivable	$ 7,329	$ (171)	$7,158	$ 7,463
Refunds from suppliers	159	-	159	30
	$ 7,488	$ (171)	$ 7,317	$ 7,493

Accounts receivable are unsecured and non-interest bearing.

NOTE 5 VALUATION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Fair value is the amount of consideration agreed upon in an arm's length transaction between knowledgeable, willing parties who are under no compulsion to act.

The fair values of cash, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities are estimated to approximate their carrying values because of the short term nature of these instruments.

NOTE 6 TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

(in thousands)

		2005			2004
	Estimated Useful Life	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Equipment*	3 – 10 Years	$ 2,420	$ 1,785	$ 635	$ 718
Computer hardware and software	3 – 5 Years	44,230	33,135	11,095	7,028
		$ 46,650	$ 34,920	$ 11,730	$ 7,746

*Equipment includes telephone system.

NOTE 7 ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES

(in thousands)

The ministry has an obligation to pay for goods and services acquired by its program areas and must also remit funds collected on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.

	2005	2004
Other Department Payables	$ 29,814	$ 27,048
Payable to Ministry of Justice	6,235	5,717
	$ 36,049	$ 32,765

NOTE 8 UNEARNED REVENUE

(in thousands)

The ministry records unearned revenue when it receives payment for services to be provided in a future accounting period(s).

	2005	2004
Fees and licenses		
Motor vehicle fees	$ 167,965	$ 158,371
Land title fees	155	120
Personal property fees	70	19
Business Corporations Act	57	75
Vital statistics	68	63
Licensing of businesses and trades	287	272
Name Changes	34	14
Other revenue		
Utilities Consumer Advocate*	1,935	1,163
	$ 170,571	$ 160,097

*Of the total external funding of $4,392 (2004 - $2,647) that was received by the Utilities Consumer Advocate, $1,935 (2004 - $1,163) was not expended and will be deducted from next year's funding contributions.

NOTE 9 CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

(in thousands)

	2005	2004
Service contracts	$ 62,374	$ 64,164

The aggregate amounts payable for the unexpired terms of these contractual obligations are as follows:

	Service Contracts
2006	$ 25,149
2007	18,020
2008	10,652
2009	7,318
2010	1,235
	$ 62,374

NOTE 10 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

(in thousands)

At March 31, 2005, the ministry is a defendant in 12 legal claims (2004 – nine legal claims). Ten of these claims have specified amounts totaling $1,734 and the remaining two have no specified amount (2004 – six claims with specified amount of $1,331 and three with no specified amount). Three claims (2004 – two claims) amounting to $990 (2004 - $940) are covered by the Alberta Risk Management Fund.

The resulting loss, if any, from these claims cannot be determined.

NOTE 11 TRUST FUNDS UNDER ADMINISTRATION

(in thousands)

The ministry administers trust funds that are regulated funds consisting of public money over which the Legislature has no power of appropriation. Because the province has no equity in the funds and administers them for the purpose of various trusts, they are not included in the ministry's financial statements.

As at March 31, 2005 trust funds under administration were as follows:

	2005	2004
Business licensing security	$ 1,945	$ 1,342
Miscellaneous trust funds	207	230
	$ 2,152	$ 1,572

NOTE 12 DEFINED BENEFIT PLANS

(in thousands)

The ministry participates in the multi-employer pension plans, Management Employees Pension Plan and Public Service Pension Plan. The ministry also participates in the multi-employer Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers. The expense for these pension plans is equivalent to the annual contributions of $1,975 for the year ended March 31, 2005 (2004 - $1,631).

At December 31, 2004, the Management Employees Pension Plan reported a deficiency of $268,101 (2003 – $290,014) and the Public Service Pension Plan reported a deficiency of $450,068 (2003 – $584,213). At December 31, 2004, the Supplementary Retirement Plan for the Public Service Managers had a surplus of $9,404 (2003 – $9,312).

The ministry also participates in two multi-employer Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plans. At March 31, 2005, the Bargaining Unit Plan reported an actuarial deficiency of $11,817 (2004 – $9,766) and the Management, Opted Out and Excluded Plan an actuarial surplus of $3,208 (2004 – $1,298). The expense for these two plans is limited to employer's annual contributions for the year.

NOTE 13 COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Certain 2004 figures have been reclassified to conform to the 2005 presentation.

NOTE 14 APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements were approved by the Senior Financial Officer and the Deputy Minister.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Revenues
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

	2005		2004
	Budget	Actual	Actual (Restated - Note 3)
Fees and licences			
Motor vehicles	$ 269,682	$ 285,068	$ 265,565
Land titles	36,854	47,250	43,938
Personal property registry	4,876	5,699	5,633
Business Corporations Act	5,112	5,255	5,083
Electronic gateway [a]	4,828	-	-
Vital statistics	3,223	3,187	3,200
Marriage licences	731	707	715
Licensing of businesses and trades	443	455	423
Name changes	290	184	271
Other	45	45	46
	326,084	347,850	324,474
Other revenue			
Utilities Consumer Advocate [b]	4,392	2,457	1,484
Refunds of expenditure	50	208	74
Miscellaneous	120	158	242
	4,562	2,823	1,800
	$ 330,646	$ 350,673	$ 326,274

(a) Actual revenue from transactions through the Electronic Gateway are now being reported under Land Titles $796 (2004 - $2,802) and Personal Property Registry $853 (2004 - $815).

(b) The program is funded through a Dedicated Revenue Program with 80 per cent contributed through the Balancing Pool (section 148 of the Electric Utilities Act) and 20 per cent through Gas Utilities (section 28.1 of the Gas Utilities Act).

Although $4,392 (2004 - $2,647) of funding was received, only $2,457 (2004 - $1,484) is reported as revenue as the unexpended portion of $1,935 (2004 - $1,163) is recorded as unearned revenue.

Schedule 2

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Dedicated Revenue Initiative
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

	2005		
	Authorized Dedicated Revenue	Actual Dedicated Revenue	Shortfall [b]
Utilities Consumer Advocate [a]	$ 4,392	$ 2,457	$ 1,935

Utilities Consumer Advocate

(a) The Utilities Consumer Advocate represents the interests of residential, farm and small commercial consumers of electricity and natural gas. It also enhances utility regulations, policies and practices, and informs consumers about electricity and natural gas issues.

80 per cent of its funding is received through the Balancing Pool (section 148 of the Electric Utilities Act) with a further 20 per cent from three providers of natural gas distribution (section 28.1 of the Gas Utilities Act). Although $4,392 of funding was received, only $2,457 is reported as revenue as the unexpended portion of $1,935 is recorded as unearned revenue.

(b) Shortfall is deducted from current year's authorized budget, as disclosed in Schedules 4 and 5 to the financial statements.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Expenses - Directly Incurred Detailed by Object
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

	2005		2004
	Budget	Actual	Actual (Restated- Note 3)
Voted			
Salaries, wages and employee benefits	$ 31,861	$ 30,354	$ 27,417
Supplies and services	46,182	43,433	43,388
Other	89	76	84
Amortization of tangible capital assets	2,445	2,326	2,254
Total voted expenses	$ 80,577	$ 76,189	$ 73,143
Statutory			
Personal Property Security Judgments	$ 5	$ -	$ -
Land Titles Registrar's Assurance Liabilities	20	-	957
Valuation Adjustments			
Provision for doubtful accounts	25	47	398
Provision for vacation pay	61	308	252
Total statutory expenses	$ 111	$ 355	$ 1,607

Schedule 4

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Budget
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

	2004-2005 Estimates	Adjustment[a]	2004-2005 Budget	Authorized Supplementary[b]	2004-2005 Authorized Budget
Revenues					
Fees and licences	$ 326,084	$ -	$ 326,084	$ -	$ 326,084
Other revenue	4,562	(1,935)	2,627	-	2,627
	330,646	(1,935)	328,711	-	328,711
Expenses - Directly Incurred					
Voted operating expenses					
Ministry Support Services	17,310	-	17,310	-	17,310
Consumer Services and Land Titles	18,489	-	18,489	-	18,489
Service Alberta and Alberta Registries	18,258	-	18,258	-	18,258
Government and Program Support Services	3,260	-	3,260	-	3,260
Strategic Information Technology Services	18,890	-	18,890	180	19,070
Utilities Consumer Advocate	4,370	(1,935)	2,435	-	2,435
	80,577	(1,935)	78,642	180	78,822
Statutory expenses					
Personal Property Security Judgments	5	-	5	-	5
Land Titles Registrar's Assurance Liabilities	20	-	20	-	20
Valuation Adjustments					
Provision for doubtful accounts	25	-	25	-	25
Provision for vacation pay	61	-	61	-	61
	111	-	111	-	111
Total expenses	80,688	(1,935)	78,753	180	78,933
Net operating results	$ 249,958	$ -	$ 249,958	$ (180)	$ 249,778
Equipment / Inventory purchases	$ 4,134	$ -	$ 4,134	$ -	$ 4,134

(a) As dedicated revenue (Schedule 2) was less than the budget, program spending estimates were encumbered. The encumbrance reduced the budgeted amount for voted expenses in the current year.

(b) The ministry received a supplementary estimate of $180 for amortization expenses to address changes resulting from Treasury Board approved transfers from operating to capital expenses.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Schedule 5

SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Comparison of Expenses – Directly Incurred, EIP and Statutory Expenses By Element to Authorized Budget

Year ended March 31, 2005

(in thousands)

	2004-05 Estimates	Adjustments*	2004-05 Budget	Authorized Supplementary**	2004-05 Authorized Budget	2004-05 Actual Expenses	Unexpended (Over Expended)
Voted Expenses and EIP							
Ministry Support Services							
Minister's Office	$ 374	$ -	$ 374	$ -	$ 374	$ 354	$ 20
Deputy Minister's Office	437	-	437	-	437	430	7
Business and Financial Services	1,844	-	1,844	-	1,844	1,898	(54)
Communications	356	-	356	-	356	326	30
Human Resources Services	831	-	831	-	831	798	33
Legal Services	133	-	133	-	133	128	5
Shared Services	13,335	-	13,335	-	13,335	12,692	643
	17,310	-	17,310	-	17,310	16,626	684
Consumer Services and Land Titles							
Program Support	553	-	553	-	553	452	101
Consumer Services	5,352	-	5,352	-	5,352	5,349	3
Land Titles Services	11,020	-	11,020	-	11,020	10,788	232
Call Centres							
– Operating expenses	1,564	-	1,564	-	1,564	1,432	132
– Equipment / Inventory purchases	200	-	200	-	200	198	2
	18,689	-	18,689	-	18,689	18,219	470
Service Alberta and Alberta Registries							
Program Support	245	-	245	-	245	328	(83)
Service Alberta	379	-	379	-	379	364	15
Registry Services							
– Operating expenses	17,634	-	17,634	-	17,634	18,485	(851)
– Equipment / Inventory purchases	200	-	200	-	200	143	57
	18,458	-	18,458	-	18,458	19,320	(862)
Government and Program Support Services							
Program Support	210	-	210	-	210	220	(10)
Regulatory and Program Review	152	-	152	-	152	112	40
Access to Information and Privacy	699	-	699	-	699	742	(43)
Information management	1,033	-	1,033	-	1,033	850	183
Legislative Planning	581	-	581	-	581	619	(38)
Compliance Accountability and Risk Management	585	-	585	-	585	621	(36)
	3,260	-	3,260	-	3,260	3,164	96

Schedule 5

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Comparison of Expenses – Directly Incurred, EIP and Statutory Expenses By Element to Authorized Budget
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

	2004-05 Estimates	Adjustments[a]	2004-05 Budget	Authorized Supplementary[b]	2004-05 Authorized Budget	2004-05 Actual Expenses[c]	Unexpended (Over Expended)
Strategic Information Technology Services							
Information Technology Planning and Operations							
- Operating expenses	7,591	-	7,591	-	7,591	7,043	548
- Equipment / Inventory purchases	-	-	-	-		631	(631)
Registries Information Systems							
- Operating expenses	11,299	-	11,299	180	11,479	9,735	1,744
- Equipment / Inventory purchases	3,734	-	3,734	-	3,734	5,338	(1,604)
	22,624	-	22,624	180	22,804	22,747	57
Utilities Consumer Advocate							
Deputy Minister's Office	375	(171)	204	-	204	204	-
Advocacy Services	3,995	(1,764)	2,231	-	2,231	2,219	12
	4,370	(1,935)	2,435	-	2,435	2,423	12
Total voted expenses and EIP	$ 84,711	$ (1,935)	$ 82,776	$ 180	$ 82,956	$ 82,499	$ 457
Operating expenses	$ 80,577	$ (1,935)	$ 78,642	$ 180	$ 78,822	$ 76,189	$ 2,633
Equipment / Inventory Purchases	4,134	-	4,134	-	4,134	6,310	(2,176)
Total voted expenses and EIP	$ 84,711	$ (1,935)	$ 82,776	$ 180	$ 82,956	$ 82,499	$ 457
Statutory expenses							
Personal Property Security Judgments	$ 5	$ -	$ 5	$ -	$ 5	$ -	$ 5
Land Titles Registrar's Assurance Liabilities	20	-	20	-	20	-	20
Valuation Adjustments							
Provision for doubtful accounts	25	-	25	-	25	47	(22)
Provision for vacation pay[d]	61	-	61	-	61	308	(247)
Total statutory expenses	$ 111	$ -	$ 111	$ -	$ 111	$ 355	$ (244)

(a) As dedicated revenues (Schedule 2) were less than the budget, program spending estimates were encumbered. The encumbrance reduced the budgeted amount for voted expenses in the current year.

(b) The ministry received a supplementary estimate of $180 for amortization expenses to address changes resulting from Treasury Board approved transfers from operating to capital expenses.

(c) Includes achievement bonuses amounting to $536 to its management and opted out employees. This amount has been allocated to relevant programs.

(d) Includes provision for vacation pay for the Utilities Consumer Advocate $34.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Salary and Benefits Disclosure
Department of Government Services
Year ended March 31, 2005

	2005				2004
	Base Salary[1]	Other Cash Benefits[2]	Other Non-Cash Benefits[3]	Total	Total
Senior Official					
Deputy Minister Government Services[5]	$ 101,872	$ -	$ 17,534	$ 119,406	$ 120,852
Deputy Minister Government Services[6]	59,280	11,279	13,304	83,863	118,973
Total for Deputy Minister Government Services	161,152	11,279	30,838	203,269	239,825
Executives					
Assistant Deputy Ministers					
Consumer Services and Land Titles[7]	132,216	19,725	24,671	176,612	172,184
Service Alberta and Alberta Registries[7]	132,216	19,736	25,562	177,514	173,024
Government and Program Support Services[7]	119,196	17,522	23,741	160,459	144,717
Executive Director, Information Technology	111,879	16,540	21,900	150,319	149,556
Senior Financial Officer	110,222	16,698	22,914	149,834	142,033
Executive Director, Human Resource Services	97,422	18,840	19,270	135,532	121,873

Total salary and benefits relating to a position are disclosed.

(1) Base salary includes pensionable base pay.

(2) Other cash benefits include bonuses, vacation payments, overtime, leaming account, and lump sum payments.

(3) Other non-cash benefits include government's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, health care, dental coverage, group life insurance, short and long term disability plans, professional memberships and tuition fees.

(4) Automobile provided, no dollar amount included in other non-cash benefits figures.

(5) Incumbent joined Government Services in October 2003 and transferred to Community Development at the end of November 2004. 2005 salary and benefits reported relate to April 1, 2004 to November 30, 2004 (8 months) and exclude the achievement bonus as Community Development reported it for the full year. 2004 salary and benefits reported are for the period of October 2003 to March 2004 (6 months) and include 1 full year's achievement bonus (including incumbent's service in Public Affairs Bureau for April to September 2003).

(6) Incumbent was the Deputy Minister of Government Services for the period of April to September 2003 and December 2004 to March 2005. In the interim period of October 2003 to November 2004, the incumbent was the Deputy Minister of the Utilities Consumer Advocate (see information reported in Schedule 6b). Incumbent's 2005 reported salary and benefits as the Deputy Minister of Government Services for the period of December 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 (4 months) includes a prorated achievement bonus for the portion of the year spent in that position. 2004 salary and benefits reported are for the period of April 1, 2003 to September 30, 2003 (6 months).

(7) Position titles were changed in 2004-2005 to align them with changes in organizational responsibilities. The Assistant Deputy Minister, Licensing, Registry, and Consumer Services as reported in 2003-2004 became the Assistant Deputy Minister, Consumer Services and Land Titles. The Managing Director, Service Alberta became the Assistant Deputy Minister, Service Alberta and Alberta Registries. The Executive Director, Information Management, Access and Privacy became the Assistant Deputy Minister, Government and Program Support Services.

Schedule 6b

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Salary and Benefits Disclosure
Utilities Consumer Advocate
Year ended March 31, 2005

	2005				2004
	Base Salary	Other Cash Benefits[2]	Other Non-cash Benefits[3]	Total	Total
Senior Official					
Deputy Minister Utilities Consumer Advocate[4] [5]	$ 108,768	$ 21,958	$ 19,516	$ 150,242	$ 114,985
Executives					
Assistant Advocate[6]	72,068	8,425	13,156	93,649	58,153
Executive Director, Regulatory Affairs[6]	74,178	8,425	12,988	95,591	53,172

Total salary and benefits relating to a position are disclosed.

(1) Base salary includes pensionable base pay.

(2) Other cash benefits include bonuses, vacation payments, overtime, learning account, and lump sum payments.

(3) Other non-cash benefits include government's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, health care, dental coverage, group life insurance, short and long term disability plans, professional memberships and tuition fees.

(4) Automobile provided, no dollar amount included in other non-cash benefits figures.

(5) Incumbent's salary as the Deputy Minister of Utilities Consumer Advocate is for the period of April 1, 2004 to November 30, 2004 (8 months). Incumbent was then reassigned to be Deputy Minister of Government Services and his salary for the period of December 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005 (4 months) is reported in Schedule 6a. Achievement bonus has been pro-rated for the portion of the year spent in each department. The 2004 information is for the period of October 2003 to March 2004. There is no longer a separate Deputy Minister position for the Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate as the program now falls under the Department of Government Services.

(6) Associate Advocate positions were restructured in 2004-2005. Associate Advocate, Industry and Consumer Affairs became the Assistant Advocate and the Associate Advocate, Regulatory Affairs became Executive Director Regulatory Affairs. These two positions remained as part of the Executive Committee for the Utilities Consumer Advocate until December 31, 2004. Effective January 1, 2005 the Executive Committee was disbanded as the Utilities Consumer Advocate program was no longer a separate department and fell under the Department of Government Services. As a result, salaries and benefits associated with these positions are reported for the period of April 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004 (9 months) after which they are no longer considered members of Executive Committee. Achievement bonus is pro-rated for the period of time these positions were considered to be part of Executive Committee.

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Related Party Transactions
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

Related parties are those entities consolidated or accounted for on a modified equity basis in the Province of Alberta's financial statements. Related parties also include management in the ministry.

The ministry and its employees paid or collected certain taxes and fees set by regulation for permits, licences and other charges. These amounts were incurred in the normal course of business, reflect charges applicable to all users, and have been excluded from this Schedule.

The ministry had the following transactions with related parties recorded on the Statement of Operations and the Statement of Financial Position at the amount of consideration agreed upon between the related parties:

	Other Entities	
	2005	**2004**
Expenses - directly incurred		
Supplies and services	$ 15,044	$ 14,812
Payable to Alberta Justice	$ 6,235	$ 5,717
Transfer of tangible capital assets to Alberta Innovation and Science	$ -	$ 50

During the year, the ministry collected $66,574 (2004 - $57,743) on behalf of the Ministries of Infrastructure and Transportation, and Justice. Of this amount, the Ministry of Justice reports $50,089 (2004 - $41,917) as trust funds under administration.

The ministry also had the following transactions with related parties for which no consideration was exchanged. The amounts for these related party transactions are estimated based on the costs incurred by the service provider to provide the service. These amounts are not recorded in the financial statements and are disclosed in Schedule 8.

	Other Government Entities	
	2005	**2004**
Expenses - incurred by others		
Accommodation	$ 4,333	$ 3,204
Legal services	688	708
Other	6	-
	$ 5,027	$ 3,912

Schedule 8

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Allocated Costs
Year ended March 31, 2005
(in thousands)

Program	2005						2004
	Expenses - Incurred by Others			Valuation Adjustments[4]			(Restated Note 3)
	Expenses[1]	Accommodation Costs[2]	Legal Services[3]	Vacation Pay	Doubtful Accounts	Total Expenses	Total Expenses
Ministry Support Services	$ 16,626	$ 330	$ 32	$ 30	$ –	$ 17,018	$ 16,750
Consumer Services and Land Titles	18,021	1,834	167	134	15	20,171	18,357
Service Alberta and Alberta Registries	19,177	1,501	366	73	32	21,149	20,377
Government and Program Support Services	3,164	531	101	25	–	3,821	3,653
Strategic Information Technology Services	16,778	39	17	12	–	16,846	16,799
Utilities Consumer Advocate	2,423	98	5	34	–	2,560	1,569
Land Titles Registrar's Assurance Liabilities	–	–	–	–	–	–	957
	$ 76,189	$ 4,333	$ 688	$ 308	$ 47	$ 81,565	$ 78,662

(1) Expenses - Directly Incurred as per Statement of Operations exclude Valuation Adjustments.

(2) Costs shown for Accommodation (includes grants in lieu of taxes) on Schedule 7 are allocated by square footage.

(3) Costs shown for Legal Services on Schedule 7 are allocated based on estimated costs incurred by each program.

(4) Valuation Adjustments as per Statement of Operations. Vacation Pay and Doubtful Accounts provision included in Valuation Adjustments were allocated as follows:

Vacation Pay - allocated to program by employee.

Doubtful Accounts Provision - estimated allocation to program.

OTHER INFORMATION

Ministry of Government Services
Write-offs of Accounts Receivable
For the year ended March 31, 2005

Unaudited

The following statement has been prepared pursuant to Section 23 of the *Financial Administration Act*.

During 2004-05, 105 accounts receivable totalling $19,500 were written off. Of this, four accounts related to Land Titles totalling $14,400. The remainder of the write-offs related to Motor Vehicles receivables.

ACTS ADMINISTERED BY MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Government Services is responsible for a wide array of legislation that has a direct impact on the quality of life and the health of the business climate in Alberta. Below is a list of all legislation administered by Government Services. Visit the Government Services website (www.gov.ab.ca/gs) to review these acts and regulations in more detail or contact the ministry by phone (1-877-427-4088) or e-mail (government.services@gov.ab.ca).

Act	Description
Agricultural and Recreational Land Ownership Act	Designed to prevent non-Canadians from buying significant amounts of prime agricultural and recreational land. However, the act does not discourage non-Canadian investors who wish to come to Alberta to invest in or build new manufacturing plants, processing operations, recreational developments or home subdivisions or to expand existing developments.
Business Corporations Act	Provides a mechanism for businesses to incorporate, register records, change a corporate name or share structure, file annual returns and list directors and shareholders of a corporation.
Cemeteries Act	Regulates the disposition of human remains; ensures cemeteries meet requirements of local authorities; protects consumers who invest in pre-need cemetery supplies and services; and ensures there are endowment care funds for perpetual care of the cemetery.
Cemetery Companies Act	Provides authority to allow seven or more people to form a company for the purpose of establishing one or more public cemeteries as well as establishing the method of forming a cemetery company and the operating rules.
Change of Name Act	Provides the eligibility to change one's name and a process to register a name change.
Charitable Fund-raising Act	Sets standards for charitable organizations and professional fund-raisers when soliciting contributions and helps protect the public from fraudulent, misleading or confusing solicitations.
Companies Act	Allows companies with objectives other than the acquisition of gain to incorporate.
Condominium Property Act	Provides the legislative framework for the creation and operation of any form of condominium, including residential and commercial. This act applies to all those who develop, invest in or own condominium projects.
Cooperative Associations Act	Provides the legal framework for persons wishing to associate for any co-operative venture.
Cooperatives Act	Repeals and replaces the *Cooperative Associations Act* to meet the needs of the cooperative sector in general, provide for specialized cooperatives, including new generation cooperatives and harmonize Alberta's legislation with federal and provincial cooperatives legislation.
Debtors' Assistance Act	Establishes a Debtors' Assistance Board with powers to provide service, advice and non-financial assistance to debtors who are unable to meet their liabilities.

Act	Description
Dower Act	Grants dower rights to both the husband and the wife with respect to the disposition of the homestead. This includes the right of the surviving spouse to a life estate in the homestead as well as the personal property of the deceased married person.
Fair Trading Act	Enhances consumer protection through remedies, enforcement tools and tougher penalties intended to discourage marketplace fraud. The act simplifies procedures for business, providing clearer standards to ensure a more level playing field.
Franchises Act	Governs the trading of franchises in Alberta ensuring that a prospective purchaser has the necessary information to make an informed investment decision and the civil remedies to deal with breaches of the act.
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act	Sets out the parameters for obtaining access to records of public bodies, the exceptions to disclosure, third-party intervention and public health and safety override. Also sets out the parameters for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information and defines the powers of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the process for handling complaints.
Funeral Services Act	Regulates the activities of funeral businesses and allows for the delegation of the regulation to the Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board.
Garage Keepers' Lien Act	Allows a garage keeper to register in the Personal Property Registry a lien against an owner's vehicle for repairs, parts or storage for which he/she has not been paid.
Government Organization Act - Schedule 11 s.2, 3, 4 and 14	Provides that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting management of departmental records, the establishment of programs for any matter involving the management of records and defining and classifying records.
Government Organization Act - Schedule 12	Establishes a division of the government known as Alberta Registries and sets out the statutory functions of that division.
Government Organization Act - Schedule 13, s.2 and 3	Provides the Minister with authority to develop and implement policies, programs, services and administration procedures in matters pertaining to consumer protection.
Land Titles Act	Provides the legal mechanism for registration of land-related documents and establishes priority between them. The government guarantees the title and compensates people who have been deprived of an interest in land (e.g., by error of the Registrar, fraud or forgery).
Law of Property Act	Provides legal principles concerning property such as contracts, conveyances, enforcement of mortgages and agreements for sale of land and minerals.
Marriage Act	Provides the legal authority to perform marriages (both religious and civil) as well as the legal requirements for the issuance of marriage licences and certificates.
Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act	Deals with landlord and tenant issues relating to mobile home sites in Alberta, setting minimum standards of conduct for both landlords and tenants.
Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act, s.2 and 3	Provides that the owner of every motor vehicle shall in each year pay a fee in respect to that motor vehicle the amount prescribed by regulation before the vehicle can be registered.

Act	Description
Partnership Act	Provides legal authority for persons associated in partnership for trading, manufacturing, contracting or mining proposed in Alberta. It also provides legal authority for individuals to file a trade name.
Personal Information Protection Act	The Personal Information Protection Act establishes clear, concise and common sense rules for private sector organizations when collecting, using and disclosing personal information.
Personal Property Security Act (except Part 5)	Provides the legal mechanism for all registrations and searches in the Personal Property Registry including registrations authorized under other acts. It also regulates the relationship between secured parties and debtors when personal property is used as collateral to secure payment of a debt or performance of an obligation.
Possessory Liens Act	Allows a person who has a particular lien for the payment of a debt on a chattel that the person has expended money, labour or skill, to file a lien via the Personal Property Registry.
Real Estate Act	Provides for the creation of a Real Estate Council to set and enforce standards of conduct.
Religious Societies' Land Act	Establishes a mechanism by which a religious society or congregation may hold (not in excess of 320 acres) land. It also ensures dealings with the land held by a religious society are done in accordance with the wishes of the congregation or religious society.
Residential Tenancies Act	Provides a framework for landlord and tenant relations in Alberta, setting minimum standards of conduct for both landlords and tenants.
Societies Act	Provides legal authority for a society to incorporate for a non-profit purpose and file by-laws agreed on by the society for governance.
Surveys Act s. 5(1)(d) and (2)(b)- shared with Sustainable Resource Development	Co-ordinates the establishment and maintenance of a land-related information system network, a mapping system and cartographic service.
Traffic Safety Act s.2(1), 8 and 64(a)(d)(f)(g)(m)(s) and (u)(i) to (iv) – shared with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation	Provides clarity for all road users from driver instructors, enforcement agencies and the public and represents a consolidated approach to road safety.
Vital Statistics Act	Provides for the legal registration of all Alberta births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages and adoptions. Also provides for alterations and corrections to the records, issuance of burial permits, certificates, copies, searches of records and compilation of a statistical report.
Warehousemen's Lien Act	Establishes a mechanism for any person lawfully engaged in the business of storing goods as a bailee-for-hire to register a lien against the owner of those goods for non-payment of services.
Woodmen's Lien Act	Provides a legal mechanism for any person entering into a contract for obtaining timber or logs by which it is necessary to employ workers and labourers to register a lien for non-payment of services.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF GOVERNMENT ENTITIES' FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Entities included in the Consolidated Government Reporting Entity

Fund or Agency	Ministry Annual Report
Agriculture Financial Services Corporation[1]	Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission	Health and Wellness
Alberta Capital Finance Authority	Finance
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board	Energy
Alberta Foundation for the Arts	Community Development
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission	Gaming
Alberta Government Telephones Commission	Finance
Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Endowment Fund	Finance
Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund	Finance
Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund	Finance
Alberta Heritage Science and Engineering Research Endowment Fund	Finance
Alberta Historical Resources Foundation	Community Development
Alberta Insurance Council	Finance
Alberta Pensions Administration Corporation	Finance
Alberta Petroleum Marketing Commission	Energy
Alberta Research Council Inc.	Innovation and Science
Alberta Risk Management Fund	Finance
Alberta School Foundation Fund	Education
Alberta Science and Research Authority	Innovation and Science
Alberta Securities Commission	Finance
Alberta Social Housing Corporation	Seniors and Community Supports
Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation	Community Development
Alberta Treasury Branches	Finance
ATB Investment Services Inc.	Finance
Child and Family Services Authorities: Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority East Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services Authority North Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Northeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Northwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Southeast Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Southwest Alberta Child and Family Services Authority Metis Settlements Child and Family Services Authority	Children's Services
Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation	Finance

Crop Reinsurance Fund of Alberta[1]	Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development	Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Department of Children's Services	Children's Services
Department of Community Development	Community Development
Department of Education	Education
Department of Energy	Energy
Department of Finance	Finance
Department of Gaming	Gaming
Department of Health and Wellness	Health and Wellness
Department of Innovation and Science	Innovation and Science
Department of Seniors and Community Supports	Seniors and Community Supports
Department of Solicitor General	Solicitor General
Department of Sustainable Resource Development	Sustainable Resource Development
Environmental Protection and Enhancement Fund	Sustainable Resource Development
Gainers Inc.	Finance
Government House Foundation	Community Development
Historic Resources Fund	Community Development
Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund	Community Development
iCORE Inc.	Innovation and Science
Lottery Fund	Gaming
Ministry of Advanced Education[2]	Advanced Education
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development[2]	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development	Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Ministry of Children's Services	Children's Services
Ministry of Community Development	Community Development
Ministry of Economic Development[2]	Economic Development
Ministry of Education	Education
Ministry of Energy	Energy
Ministry of Environment[2]	Environment
Ministry of Finance	Finance
Ministry of Executive Council[2]	Executive Council
Ministry of Gaming	Gaming
Ministry of Government Services[2]	Government Services
Ministry of Health and Wellness	Health and Wellness
Ministry of Human Resources and Employment[2]	Human Resources and Employment
Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation[2]	Infrastructure and Transportation
Ministry of Innovation and Science	Innovation and Science
Ministry of International and Intergovernmental Relations[2]	International and Intergovernmental Relations
Ministry of Justice[2]	Justice
Ministry of Municipal Affairs[2]	Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Restructuring and Government Efficiency[2]	Restructuring and Government Efficiency
Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports	Seniors and Community Supports
Ministry of Solicitor General	Solicitor General

[1] The Crop Reinsurance Fund of Alberta was merged into the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, effective April 1, 2003.

[2] Ministry includes only the departments so separate department financial statements are not necessary.

Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports	Seniors and Community Supports
Ministry of Solicitor General	Solicitor General
Ministry of Sustainable Resource Development	Sustainable Resource Development
N.A. Properties (1994) Ltd.	Finance
Natural Resources Conservation Board	Sustainable Resource Development
Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Boards:	Seniors and Community Supports
Calgary Region Community Board	
Central Region Community Board	
Edmonton Region Community Board	
Northeast Region Community Board	
Northwest Region Community Board	
South Region Community Board	
Persons with Developmental Disabilities Provincial Board	Seniors and Community Supports
Provincial Judges and Masters in Chambers Reserve Fund	Finance
Supplementary Retirement Plan Reserve Fund	Finance
Victims of Crime Fund	Solicitor General
Wild Rose Foundation	Community Development

Entities not included in the Consolidated Government Reporting Entity

Fund or Agency	Ministry Annual Report
Alberta Cancer Board	Health and Wellness
Alberta Foundation for Health Research	Innovation and Science
Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research	Innovation and Science
Alberta Heritage Foundation for Science and Engineering Research	Innovation and Science
Alberta Mental Health Board	Health and Wellness
Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund Board	Education
Improvement Districts' Trust Account	Municipal Affairs
Local Authorities Pension Plan	Finance
Long-Term Disability Income Continuance Plan - Bargaining Unit	Human Resources and Employment
Long-Term Disability Income Continuance Plan - Management, Opted Out and Excluded	Human Resources and Employment
Management Employees Pension Plan	Finance
Provincial Judges and Masters in Chambers Pension Plan	Finance
Provincial Judges and Masters in Chambers (Unregistered) Pension Plan	Finance
Public Post Secondary Institutions	Advance Education
Public Service Management (Closed Membership) Pension Plan	Finance
Public Service Pension Plan	Finance
Regional Health Authorities	Health and Wellness
School Boards	Education
Special Areas Trust Account	Municipal Affairs
Special Forces Pension Plan	Finance
Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers	Finance
Workers' Compensation Board	Human Resources and Employment

APPENDIX

2004-05 Performance Measure Results at a Glance

Goal	Measure	Results
Goal 1: Efficient licensing and registration services.	Percentage of ministry call centre clients who are satisfied overall with the quality of service provided to them.	• 81 per cent satisfaction rate (80 per cent target).
	Client satisfaction with:	
	• Registry agents.	• 86 per cent satisfaction rate (85 per cent target).
	• Land titles offices.	• 77 per cent satisfaction rate (80 per cent target).
	• Online registry services.	• 83 per cent satisfaction rate (Revised methodology – no target set for 2004-05)
	Comparison of Alberta's fees to other jurisdictions.	• Alberta's fees are below the targeted national average in all cases:
		• Vehicle registration renewal is 25 per cent below the national average for a Ford Taurus
		• Vehicle registration renewal is 28 per cent below the national average for a Dodge Caravan
		• Driver's licence renewal is 30 per cent below the national average.
		• Land titles registry fee is 82 per cent below the national average.
		• Collection agency licence is 35 per cent below the national average.
		• Direct selling licence is 15 per cent below the national average.
Goal 2: Informed consumers and businesses and a high standard of marketplace conduct.	Client satisfaction with call centre consumer services.	• 77 per cent satisfaction rate (80 per cent target).
	Client satisfaction with consumer investigative services.	• 72 per cent satisfaction rate (80 per cent target).
	Client satisfaction with tipsheets.	• 81 per cent satisfaction rate (85 per cent target).
Goal 3: Effective advocacy of Albertans' interests in the restructured utilities market.	Client satisfaction with services	• 52 per cent satisfaction rate with consumer information centre services (60 per cent target)
	Client awareness of Utilities Consumer Advocate services	• 31 per cent awareness rate (50 per cent target)
	Interveners satisfaction with cooperative protocol	• 20 per cent satisfaction rate (60 per cent target)
Goal 4: A service environment that enables Albertans to access government information and services in a manner of their choice.	Satisfaction with access to Government of Alberta information and services.	• 79 per cent satisfaction rate (85 per cent target).
	Awareness that Government of Alberta information and services are available through Service Alberta	• 53 per cent awareness rate (70 per cent target).
Goal 5: Effective management of, and access to information and protection of privacy.	Percentage of FOIP requests completed within 60 days.	• 94 per cent of all FOIP requests completed in 60 days or less (exceeded target of 90 per cent).
	Percentage of FOIP requests handled without complaint.	• 95 per cent of all FOIP requests received were handled without complaint to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (exceeded target of 90 per cent).

2004-05 Performance Measure Source and Methodology

A telephone survey is conducted in July, October, December and March. Synovate, a private marketing research firm, was commissioned in 2004-05 to conduct this satisfaction research. Alberta Government Services provides Synovate with the population of callers from which to randomly sample the respondents.

The survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services they received. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Registry Call Centre Satisfaction Sample Sizes and Margin of Error

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	300	300	300
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±5.7%	±5.7%	±5.7%

Source: 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate.

81 per cent (key performance measure) of those people surveyed expressed satisfaction with the registry related services provided which meets the target of 80 per cent.

A comprehensive satisfaction survey of clients who accessed registration and licensing products was conducted. Synovate was commissioned in 2003-04 to complete satisfaction research, which builds on results from prior years for the registry agents and land titles service delivery channels.*

Each of the three main channels has its own survey instrument and methodology. The registry agents and land titles offices surveying was performed in June, September and November 2004 and February 2005. The surveying concerning online registry services was performed in two studies conducted in June 2004 and December 2004.

Each survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services they received. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Registry agents: Albertans (18 or older) who recalled visiting a registry agent office during the past year were surveyed by telephone.

Registry Agent Satisfaction Sample Sizes and Confidence Intervals

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	503	601	602
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±4.4%	±4.0%	±4.0%

Source: 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate.

Land titles offices: A self-completion survey was requested from representatives from businesses that have an account with the Land Titles Office.

Land Title Offices Satisfaction Sample Sizes and Margin of Error

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	344	524	506
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±5.3%	±4.3%	±4.4%

Source: 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate.

Online registry services: A semi-annual self-completion survey was requested from representatives from businesses that subscribe to Online Registry Services.

Online Registry Satisfaction Sample Sizes and Confidence Intervals

	2004-05
Sample Size	404
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±4.9%

Source: 2004-05 Synovate.

> Results

Results for this measure are:

- Registry agents:
  86 per cent (key performance measure) satisfaction with the service provided (85 per cent target).
- Land titles offices:
  77 per cent (key performance measure) satisfaction with the registration process (80 per cent target).
- Online registry services:
  83 per cent (baseline result) satisfaction with the level of service (No target set for 2004–05 – new methodology).

Comparison of Alberta's fees to other jurisdictions on key motor vehicle fees (vehicle registration and driver's licence)

Ministry staff contacted provincial and territorial governments across Canada to collect information on fees for vehicle registrations and driver's licences. To facilitate a reliable and meaningful comparative analysis, two key products were identified for the Motor Vehicles Registry: vehicle

registration renewal and driver's licence renewal. These two products are the most common transactions, are available in a similar form in all Canadian jurisdictions and are the most familiar to the general public.

Since many jurisdictions use formulas (e.g., weight of a vehicle), these registrations were put into common scenarios to standardize comparisons across all provinces.

- Vehicle registration: Fee associated with the renewal of a Ford Taurus sedan weighing 1,494 kilograms in an urban area (service/administrative fees included).
- Vehicle registration: Fee associated with the renewal of a Dodge Caravan weighing 1,880 kilograms in an urban area (service/administrative fees included).
- Driver's licence: The renewal fee to renew a driver's licence with no demerits, based on a standard five-year renewal (service/administrative fees included). A five-year renewal period was selected, as this is a common renewal timeframe selected by Albertans.

> Results

The results of the fee comparison indicated the target has been met, as Alberta's fees for these products are competitive with national standards:

- The vehicle registration fee:
  25 per cent (key performance measure) below the national average for a Ford Taurus.
- The vehicle registration fee:
  28 per cent below the national average for a Dodge Caravan.
- The driver's licence renewal fee:
  30 per cent (key performance measure) below the national average.

Comparison of Alberta's fees to other jurisdictions on registration costs associated with purchasing a $150,000 house with a $140,000 mortgage

Ministry staff contacted provincial/territorial government agencies that use the Torrens system to define land ownership. Under the Torrens system, an interest in land must be duly registered with a central registry maintained by a provincial government and all registrations in the land

registry are backed by the provincial government. In addition to Alberta, eight other provinces and territories use this system: British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

To facilitate a reliable and meaningful comparative analysis, the following key products were identified for the Land Titles Registry:

- Transfer of Title
- Registration of Mortgage
- Registration of Caveat
- Discharge of Caveat (from previous owner)
- Discharge of Mortgage (from previous owner)

These five products are typically required when Albertans wish to purchase a home. In some jurisdictions, a land transfer tax is also included as part of registering the transfer of a title. Where applicable, this tax was also included in the analysis in order to represent an appropriate end cost to consumers.

Furthermore, since some of the products employ formulas, these registrations were put into a common scenario to standardize them across all provinces. Specifically, all applicable provincial government fees associated with purchasing a $150,000 home with a mortgage of $140,000 have been included.

Results

82 per cent below (key performance measure) the national average. At $133 (sum of all five products), the target has been met. Alberta's fees are indeed competitive with national standards.

Ministry staff contacted provincial and territorial government agencies across Canada to collect information on the fees charged for various business licences. It is important to note that Alberta charges a single, flat fee for each licence being compared. To ensure a meaningful comparison, the following assumptions were made:

Collection agency licence
Comparisons were made against the minimum business fee charged in the province or territory for either a new licence or a renewal, whichever was lower, regardless of company size.

Direct selling licence
Comparisons were made against the minimum fee charged to sole proprietors, partnerships or corporations excluding additional charges for branch or satellite offices. Where the fee was for a multi-year period, comparisons were made using the annual equivalent (e.g., $200 for a two-year licence would be $100 on an annual basis).

Results

The collection agency licence fee:

35 per cent below (key performance measure) the national average.

The direct selling licence fee:

15 per cent below (key performance measure) the national average.

Both fees are therefore competitive with the national average.

Goal 2: Informed consumers and businesses and a high standard of marketplace conduct

A telephone survey is conducted in July, October, December and March. Synovate, a private marketing research firm, was commissioned in 2004-05 to conduct this satisfaction research. Alberta Government Services provides Synovate with the population of callers from which to randomly sample the respondents.

The survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services they received. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Consumer Call Centre Satisfaction Sample Sizes and Margin of Error

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	301	302	300
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±5.6%	±5.6%	±5.7%

Source: 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate.

> Results

77 per cent satisfaction (key performance measure) of those people surveyed expressed satisfaction with the consumer related services provided which almost meets the target of 80 per cent.

Percentage of clients who are "satisfied overall" with the quality of investigative services.

A random, quarterly telephone survey was conducted with clients of the Consumers Investigations unit. Synovate, a national marketing research firm, was commissioned to conduct this satisfaction research. The research was conducted in four studies, with fielding occurring in June (2004), September (2004), December (2004) and March (2005).

Four studies were undertaken to capture cases closed between:

- March and May 2004
- June and August 2004
- September and November 2004
- December 2004 to February 2005

The survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with how their cases were handled. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Satisfaction with Investigation Sample Sizes and Margin of Error

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	400	600	600
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±4.9%	±4.0%	±4.0%

Source: 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate.

> Results

72 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were satisfied with how their investigation was handled in comparison to 80 per cent target.

Percentage of clients who are satisfied with the overall quality of tipsheet information

A semi-annual telephone survey was conducted with callers who contacted the Government Services call centre and received a consumer tipsheet. A private marketing research firm, Synovate, was commissioned to conduct 2004-05 satisfaction research. Two rounds of research were conducted, the first in November 2004 and the second in March 2005. The November study contacted consumers who requested a tipsheet from the call centre between May and October 2004. The March study contacted consumers who requested a tipsheet from the call centre between November 2004 and February 2005.

The survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the tipsheet they received. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Tipsheet Satisfaction Results, Sample Sizes and Margin of Error

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	301	408	400
95 per cent Confidence Interval	±5.6%	±4.9%	±4.9%

Source: 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 Synovate.

> Results

81 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents indicated satisfaction with tipsheets, which almost meets the target of 85 per cent.

Criterion Research, a marketing research firm, conducted a survey of those who contacted the consumer information centre from April to October 2004. The target respondents for baseline research included those who provided contact information when they contacted (either by phone or mail) the consumer information centre between April and October 2004.

Criterion conducted 379 telephone interviews (359 on those who contacted by phone, 20 on those who contacted by mail) from December 7-14, 2004. Approximately 1,300 names were collected by the Utilities Consumer Advocate's staff, of which 481 included telephone numbers. Criterion conducted a reverse directory search to obtain telephone numbers for roughly 800 names for which telephone numbers were unavailable. This search returned telephone numbers for 456 names. The useable sample, including names and telephone numbers, was thus 937 callers. After removing duplicates and individuals requesting they not be contacted for market research purposes, the total sample available to Criterion was 924 callers.

Satisfaction is measured using a seven-point scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Results

52 per cent (key performance measure) of those surveyed were satisfied overall with service in comparison to a 60 per cent target.

Two telephone surveys were conducted by Environics Research Group, a baseline survey and a tracking survey. The results of the surveys are based on a probability sample of at least 1000 adults living in Alberta. The baseline survey (1003 Albertans) was conducted from July 6–8, 2004 and the tracking survey (1000 Albertans) from February 10–19, 2005.

The sampling method was designed to complete 1,000 interviews per survey within households randomly selected across the province of Alberta. The sample was drawn in proportion to the populations of 12 urban centres and three rural regions within the province based on information from Statistics Canada 2001 Census Data. From within each multi-person household contacted, respondents 18 years of age and older were screened for random selection using the most recent birthday method. The use of this technique produces results that are valid and effective as enumerating all persons within a household and selecting one randomly.

Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses. A minimum of 10 per cent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Association of Marketing Research Organizations. A minimum of five calls was made to a household before classifying it as "no answer." Awareness was measured using a "yes/no" question, where respondents who indicated yes were considered aware and no as unaware.

31 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were aware of the role/services provided by the Utilities Consumer Advocate compared to a target of 50 per cent.

Percentage of interveners expressing satisfaction with the co-operative protocol utilized by the Utilities Consumer Advocate

The target respondents were the 14 interveners (identified by the UCA), defined as an organization other than a utility or individual company that directly participates in the utility regulatory process and may represent consumers or producers of utility services and products. Leger Marketing (formerly Criterion Research) conducted 10 telephone interviews between December 8, 2004 and January 4, 2005, which represents a 71 per cent response rate.

The survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is extremely dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is extremely satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were that the co-operative protocol would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory interventions on behalf of small utility consumers. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

As a census was conducted, margin of error and confidence intervals do not apply.

> Results

20 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents were satisfied that the co-operative protocol would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory interventions on behalf of small utility consumers compared to the 60 per cent target.

Goal 4: A service delivery environment that enables Albertans to access government information and services in a manner of their choice

Percentage of Albertans who are aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and/or website.

Research Innovations, an independent research contractor, conducted a random telephone survey of Albertans in February and March 2005.

A representative sample was used and consisted of Albertans, 18 years of age or older. Within each geographic area of the province (as defined by postal forward sorting areas), quotas were established for the number of interviews with each age group (i.e., 18-34, 35-54, 54 years or older) and, within each age segment, for the number of contacts with males and females.

All respondents were asked if they were aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and/or website.

Access to Government of Alberta Sample Sizes and Confidence Intervals

	2004-05
Sample Size	1200
95 Per cent Confidence Interval	±2.8%

Source: 2004-05 Research Innovations.

> Results

53 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents are aware that Government of Alberta information and services are available through the Service Alberta toll-free number and/or website compared to a target of 70 per cent.

Research Innovations, an independent research contractor, conducted a random telephone survey of Albertans in February and March 2005.

A representative sample was used and consisted of Albertans, 18 years of age or older. Within each geographic area of the province (as defined by postal forward sorting areas), quotas were established for the number of interviews with each age group (i.e., 18-34, 35-54, 54 years or older) and, within each age segment, for the number of contacts with males and females.

Those who actually accessed or tried to access Government of Alberta service or information in person, by telephone, on the Internet or by mail/fax were asked to rate their satisfaction with being able to access government services.

The survey employs a seven-point satisfaction scale, where one is very dissatisfied, four is neutral and seven is very satisfied. Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services they received. A satisfied respondent is defined as providing a five, six or seven on the seven-point scale, while dissatisfied is one, two or three.

Access to Government of Alberta Sample Sizes and Confidence Intervals

	2003-04	2004-05
Sample Size	317	354
95 Per cent Confidence Interval	±5.5%	±5.2%

Source: 2003-04 and 2004-05 Research Innovations.

> Results

79 per cent (key performance measure) of respondents indicated satisfaction with access to Government of Alberta information and services compared to a target of 85 per cent.

Goal 5: Effective management of and access to information and protection of privacy

Percentage of FOIP requests completed by government public bodies within 60 days or less.

All public bodies, including ministries, Executive Council, the Legislative Assembly Office, Office of the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ethics Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner and agencies, boards and commissions designated in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* (FOIP) *Regulation* submitted quarterly statistical reports of their FOIP requests for 2004-05.

The public bodies track FOIP requests manually or use the FOIP Request Tracking System. Ministry staff verify the quarterly statistical reports to ensure that the reports balance and are consistent with the previously submitted reports. The number of requests reported as completed in 30 days or under and 31 to 60 days are combined and reported against the total number of requests completed.

As of October 29, 2004, public bodies using the FOIP Request Tracking System converted to the new web-based application, FOIPNet.

Following the November 23, 2005 Order-In-Council, there were 71 public bodies reporting including ministries, Executive Council, the Legislative Assembly Office, Office of the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Ethics Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner and agencies, boards and commissions.

> Results

94 per cent (key performance measure) of FOIP requests were completed within 60 days. The target of 90 per cent was exceeded.

Percentage of FOIP requests handled without complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner uses a tracking system to log all complaints it receives under sections 65 and 53(2) of the FOIP Act. Public bodies track FOIP requests manually or use the FOIP Request Tracking System. Ministry staff verify the quarterly statistical reports to ensure the reports balance and are consistent with previously submitted reports. The number of requests received are combined and reported against complaints received by the Commissioner's Office.

As of October 29, 2004, public bodies using the FOIP Request Tracking System converted to the new web-based application, FOIPNet.

> Results

95 per cent (key performance measure) of FOIP request have been handled without complaint. The target of 90 per cent was exceeded.

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